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ABSTRACT

This conference proceedings of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) contains 19 presentations and workshops. An introductory section includes SPERA's mission, goals, and history; a brief welcome address by SPERA president Sheila King; a list of past conference proceedings; and abstracts of presentations. The presentations are: (1) "Celebrating Connnectedness" (Robin Maslen); (2) "Successes of a Rural University: Whyalla Campus, University of South Australia" (Jim Harvey); (3) "Health and Safety for Young People in Rural Areas" (Stephen Parker); (4) "Self-Esteem in Rural Schools: Dreams and Aspirations" (Deidra J. Young); (5) "Rural and Remote Professional Practice Placements for Children's Studies Students" (Stephanie Jackiewicz, Rosa Lincoln, Kristen Brockman); (6) "First Year University in Retrospect: The Voices of Rural Students" (Brian Hemmings, Doug Hill, David Ray); (7) "Rural Students Continuing Their Studies in University Contexts" (Brian Hemmings, Russell Kay, Doug Hill); (8) "Leigh Creek Area School-Royal Zoological Society of South Australia Yellow-Footed Rock-Wallaby (Andu) Reintroduction Project" (Colin Murdoch, Katie Bedding); (9) "Delivering the Arts Curriculum in Isolated Settings: Outback Eisteddfod" (Ray Marino); (10) "Partnerships, Technology and Teaching: Celebrating the Link between Universities and Rural Communities" (Ian W. Gibson, Sheila King); (11) "Incidental Education (for Women) in Rural Communities" (Valmai Crosby); (12) "Celebrating Distance Teaching Innovations: The Certificate in Distance Teaching" (Colin Boylan, Juhani Tuovinen); (13) "Literacy Networks in the Community" (Karen Gardner, Sue Fairley, Henry Condon); (14) "A Picture Postcard Perspective of Rural Communities" (Sheila King); (15) "Identification of Barriers That Confront Rural Students Entering the University System" (Jennifer Roe); (16) "The Emotional Transition of Twelve Year Olds from Home to a Boarding Situation" (Katrina Mason); (17) "A Focus on Rural Australia for Students at the University of Ballarat" (Keith Moore); (18) "Forum: Student Reflection on Successful Rural Education" (Carrie-ann Mickan, Neralie Rowan); and (19) "What Is Ag-Ed?" (Judy Lindley). (SV)

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CELEBRATING RURAL EDUCATION.

Proceedings of the 13th National Conference

6-8th July, 1997
Adelaide, South Australia

Colin Murdoch
Giovanna Wood

RC 021943

Society for the Provision of Education in
Rural Australia Inc

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***Raukkan Aboriginal School**

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***Department for Education and Children's Services, S.A.**

***Aboriginal Education Unit -DECS**

*** Monarto Zoological Park**

***Satisfac Direct**

***Mr Ray Marino and Mrs Giovanna Wood of Leigh Creek Area School**

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WELCOME ADDRESS

Good morning everyone and welcome to the 13th annual conference of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia or SPERA's celebration of Rural Education.
What better place to hold a three day celebration than in South Australia, the Festival State.

A special welcome to those who are attending their first SPERA conference. I hope you will find this opportunity a wonderful experience. Welcome back to those who have attended other SPERA conferences, your loyalty and friendship is greatly appreciated.

We have educators, students, community members and administrators all with something to celebrate today. The first thing to celebrate is that SPERA has come to South Australia for the first time, twelve conferences have been held all over Australia, but this is the first one in South Australia.
The preparation for this celebration commenced over a year ago and Colin Murdoch and Jenny Curtis, with assistance from other SPERA members have pulled together an exciting three day program. The actual celebration commenced with the photograph of Leigh Creek Area School on the cover of *Education in Rural Australia, 1997*.
You are ensured of a quality program even if the numbers of participants are small. Great things come small packages. You now have a key role to play in this celebration - **P**articipate in a **P**artnership of **P**ositive outcomes.

Participate to the full, share your vision, be involved.

Partnerships will be a key to the opportunities over the next three days. SPERA has formed a new partnership with ASPA and we appreciate the role they have played in ensuring the success of this conference- a special thanks to Ray Marino, President of ASPA, who has worked tirelessly for this cause. You now have the opportunity to form partnerships across systems, across states.

A **P**ositive outcome of this celebration will be that some of the perceptions and myths about regional and rural education will be changed or challenged.The provision of Education in Rural Australia is :
Innovative
Exciting
Challenging.

So what is your challenge as you participate in this three day celebration?
Here is an opportunity to make a statement, share a vision, participate with a purpose. You can make a difference- we won't get a second chance at creating a first impression.This conference is like a cooking pot simmering on the stove, lets bring it to the boil and celebrate rural education to the full.

Sheila King, President
Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia Inc

Past Conference Proceedings

A valuable source of information on developments and the provision of education in rural Australia is available through the collection of papers written by many people which have been presented at past SPERA conferences. The writers provide insights into the types of innovative services and programs which have been developed by communities, individuals and institutions to promote the provision of education services in rural Australia.

WORKING TOGETHER - RURAL COMMUNITIES AND EDUCATION

1987 CONFERENCE Edited by Dr Don Reeves

RURAL COMMUNITIES DETERMINING THEIR FUTURE

1988 CONFERENCE Edited by Dr Don Reeves

THE FAMILY AND EDUCATION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA

1989 CONFERENCE Edited by Colin Boylan

WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN FOR EDUCATION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA?

1990 CONFERENCE Edited by Colin Boylan

TOWARDS 2000 SCHOOLING THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

1993 CONFERENCE Edited by Dan Riley

THE RURAL COMMUNITY AND ITS SCHOOL: IN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

1994 CONFERENCE Edited by Dan Riley

LIFELONG LEARNING IN RURAL AREA:BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

1995 CONFERENCE Edited by Dan Riley

RURAL EDUCATION:QUALITY PROVISION, QUALITY EXPERIENCES, QUALITY OUTCOMES

1196 CONFERENCE Edited by Colin Boylan and Peter d'Plesse

Copies of the 1987-1991 Proceedings can be purchased for $25.00 per copy. The cost of the 1992, 1994, 1995 and 1996 Proceedings is $35.00 the cost of the 1993 Proceedings is $58.00

Please make cheques payable to SPERA Inc. and the order to:

Conference Proceedings,

SPERA,

PO Box 379,

DARLING HEIGHTS, QLD., 4350

SPERA History

SPERA emerged from a NSW in-service activity organised by Marie Dale in 1984.

The activity brought together Marie Dale and Bob Meyenn, then lecturer in Education at Wagga CAE and the pair went on to organise a national conference on rural education which was held in Armidale NSW in 1985. At this conference SPERA was endorsed as a national organisation and Marie became its foundation president.

Concerned by the effect the "disadvantaged" label was having on rural communities Marie and Bob saw the need to establish a national organisation which would advance the positive aspects of rural life and rural education and celebrate the unique features of rural education.

Around the time SPERA formed, CAP and DSP had been operating some ten years and rural communities were becoming conditioned to accept the "disadvantaged" label in order to attract funds. It concerned Marie that these communities were locking themselves into such a negative mind set.

SPERA is an organisation which celebrates the "doers" in rural education and has promoted many wonderful examples of education excellence in schools, TAFE, universities, adult and agricultural education at its national conferences over the last 12 years.

Its leadership has been shared by community people, adult educators, academics and school administrators from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and more recently Western Australia.

In 1991 SPERA published a journal, *Education in Rural Australia* with Colin Boylan at its editor.

In its 10th year, SPERA launched the Australian Rural Education Award to acknowledge education achievements in rural Australia and celebrates SPERA's commitment to advance the positive aspects of living, working and being education in a rural Community.

Marie Dale

SPERA : Mission and Goals

MISSION

The Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia Incorporated (SPERA) links people with a diverse range of interests in education and training to promote the development of rural Australia by:

(i) promoting a positive view of education in rural areas and encouraging innovation
(ii) and initiative in the provision of rural education services;

(iii) providing a framework for the sharing of concerns, issues and experiences relating to education and training in rural areas.

GOALS

SPERA advances the education and training opportunities for all people in rural Australia by:

(i) promoting state and regional delivery systems which bring about efficient and effective education for people in rural areas;

(ii) encouraging both the collection and sharing of relevant information on the provision of education in rural areas;

(iii) conducting an annual national conference to exchange ideas and information about education and training in rural education;

(iv) serving as a national advocate representing rural education and training.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS AT 13TH. CONFERENCE

1. "Management and Leadership course run in conjunction with DECS for country principals and coordinators."
Robin Maslen, Adelaide Social Worker, Psychotherapist and Management Consultant.

Robin is the Chief Commissioner of the Scout Association, a Churchill Fellow and has been actively involved in youth matters for the past 40 years. Some of his work experiences include managing the South Australian Youth Training Centre at Magill, managing Yatala Labour prison, owning a private hospital, and as a private practitioner providing counselling services for individuals and families. As the President of an international organisation for professional therapists and consultants, Robin has travelled extensively and conduced workshops in many countries. One of these programs is a management and leadership course run in conjunction with DECS for country principals and coordinators.

2. "Successes of a Rural University: Whyalla Campus, University of South Australia."
Jim Harvey, Dean: Whyalla.

Rural and regional universities play a central role in regional development. They contribute significantly to the educational, economic and social/cultural dimensions of their regions. They are major employees, significant consumers of local goods and services and add value to infra structure and human service development.
Their workshop examines the strategic choices of a small regional Campus of a large metropolitan university. It describes how the tyranny of distance is being tackled through the use of a variety of approaches. The Campus has adopted a solution-oriented approach to the difficulties it faces, focusing on long-term development strategies rather than short-term 'quick fix' solutions.
The session will provide examples which celebrate the Campus's increasingly important role in rural education.

3. "Health and Safety for Young People in Rural Areas."
Stephen Parker, Project Officer, Southern Vales Community Health Service.

The goal of the project is to specifically focus on young people who are vulnerable to injury working and living in rural areas. The project will endeavour to contribute to their knowledge, skills and understanding in identifying hazards and raising awareness of safe environments. It will build on existing successful intersectoral relationships already established with the Department for Education and Children's Service (DECS) the local health service and local industry in the Southern Vales area.

4. "Self-Esteem in Rural Schools."
Diedra J. Young. Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia.

The Western Australian School Effectiveness Study (WASES) is particularly focused on the effective rural school. As part of this study, a number of rural secondary schools are being studied over a three year period resulting in the collection of an extensive array of information from the parents, students, teachers and administrators.

This presentation will describe some of the results from this study, including the role of the student's self-concept (self esteem) in relationship to ambition and achievement.

5."The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement: A Comparison of Rural and Urban Schools in Australia."
Beverley J. Webster and Deidra J. Young

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) was conducted in Australia in 1994 among 12,852 13 year old students in 161 schools.
A structural equation model was used to compare rural and urban schools. The effect of school and classroom resource availability was analysed with emphasis on the student's mathematics and science achievement.

6. "The Rural and Remote Placement as part of a major in Children Studies."
Stephanie Jackiewicz, Kristen Brockman and Rosa Lincoln,
Edith Cowan University,Joondalup Campus. W.A.

Research has shown that rural communities are often lacking in services and personnel who are suitably prepared to operate them. Provision of services such as schools, child care and other children's services in rural areas, requires an understanding of the needs of these communities. This paper looks at how one course has attempted to alleviate this lack of suitability and understanding, by the inclusion of a rural and remote practice. The course prepares graduates to work in a variety of children's services, including those in both metropolitan and rural and remote areas. The paper specifically looks at the four key stake holders involved in this experience, the students, staff, university and the local communities. Some of the experiences encountered will be shared in the paper, however, the true value of such an event can only be gained by experiencing it for oneself. The insight gained by these four groups has been invaluable and a close bond has been formed between all who participated in this experience.

7. "First year university in Retrospect:The Voices of Rural Students"
Brian Hemmings, Doug Hill and David Ray

This study provides a personal, retrospective account of the perceived successes and failures encountered by a sample of rural students during their first year of tertiary study. Collected via an interview format, their comments point to a clear set of challenges, strategies, and suggestions that may prove valuable to other rural students considering attending university as well as to those professionals charged with providing them with counselling and guidance.

8."Rural Students Continuing their Studies in University Contexts"
Brian Hemmings, Russell Kay and Doug Hill

This paper reports on a longitudinal study of Riverina-based senior secondary school students who began university studies within three years of completing the NSW

Higher School Certificate (HSC). Information was collected by survey instruments during Years 10 and 11, and whilst students were attending university. School records provided data on school achievement in the Year 10 Reference Tests and the HSC results in Year 12. The findings from a discriminant analysis showed that a combination of five school variables was able to accurately classify students subsequently proceeding to university. A logit analysis, based on these same students, demonstrated that two variables, namely, HSC performance and university course satisfaction/enjoyment, were significant influences on pass rate in first year tertiary study and that the latter was more important. The paper concludes with a discussion of a tentative model which describes the key factors affecting tertiary success.

9. "Royal Zoological Society of South Australia - Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby (Andu) Reintroduction Project".
Colin Murdoch, Leigh Creek Area School, Leigh Creek, South Australia.

Students have taken over the Public Relations for a major conservation program involving Adelaide and Monarto Zoos as well as other Zoos, ETSA, DENR and local landholders. This is presented on site at Monarto Zoo by Colin and his students.

10. "Delivering the Arts Curriculum in isolated settings - Outback Eisteddfod".
Ray Marino, Principal, Leigh Creek Area School, Leigh Creek, South Australia.

The Arts are bringing rural communities together in the Far North District. Arts education across twenty seven schools, some very isolated, some Aboriginal, is delivered in a variety of ways to allow students to study Drama, Dance, Music and Visual Arts.
Two initiatives - the Outback Eisteddfod at Marree and the district "Music Camp' with jazz great Don Burrows in Leigh Creek show that country district schools don't have to go the big smoke to allow students to participate and experience success in the Arts.

11." Celebrating the Partnership: Teaching and Technology creating the link between universities and Rural Australia."
Dr Ian W. Gibson and Sheila King.

A workshop where participants will be expected to participate and contribute to a workshop product that will then be published as part of the paper in the proceedings.

12. "The Country Women's Association - Incidental Education (for women) in Rural Communities."
Valmai Crosby

The Country Women's Association has a successful history of providing numerous avenuse for rural women to pursue improved self-esteem, incidental education, cultural pursuits and expanding women's abilities and horizons. This is achieved through running formal meetings, simple accounting and leadership training, public speaking, studying a country each year and annual projects such as lymphodeoma and cystic fibrosis which educate the general public as well as raise funds. This is truly education in its widest sense.

13 "Celebrating Distance Teaching Innovations The Certificate in Distance Teaching"
Dr Colin Boylan, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW

This workshop presentation provides an overview of the two subjects - Pedagogy of Distance Teaching and Organisation of Distance that constitute the Certificate in Distance Teaching

program offered by CSU. Data on students' responses to each subject and the program as a whole will be presented together with some success stories of students working in distance education settings.

14 "Literacy Networks in the Community"
Karen Gardner, Sue Fairley and Henry Condon, Ravenshoe State School.

Following the 1992 SPERA Conference in Armidale at which Sue Fairley attended a workshop conducted by Michelle Anstey and Geoff Bull, a group of interested parents sought funding to investigate literacy in the community. The result was a three stage literacy project, still underway in 1997.

15 "An International Picture Postcard of Rural Communities"
Sheila King, University of Southern Queensland and President of SPERA.

Sheila had the opportunity to spend some times in rural communities in Canada, America and Britain. In this workshop she will share snippets of her experiences of visiting rural schools, spending time with rural communities and interacting with rural educators. The workshop will endeavour to introduce the participants to schools, regional institutions and community education opportunities in various rural and isolated settings. There will be opportunity to compare, contrast and celebrate.

16 "Identification of the barriers that confront rural students upon entering the university system and the strategies devised and implemented" Jenny Roe

The rural life is a wonderful life for many: with open spaces, often small, close knit communities and reduced hustle and bustle due to smaller populations. But in conjunction with these smaller populations comes the limited provisions of goods and services. Services that provide both life and employment enhancing opportunities to their consumer. Universities are such services. It is because of this lack of provisional tertiary education in rural regions, that the majority of rural youths must leave their homes, families and thus support networks. University can be an exciting time where new friends, knowledge and contacts are made. However for these rural students who have made the transition to university, it is not only the university life that they must now adjust to, rather there are many consequential and therefore additional.

17 "Support systems for year 8 Students (12 - 14 years) provided at 2 residential schools to support rural students." Katrina Matson.

Often in Australia, isolation creates barriers to opportunities and facilities that are readily available to other children. Leaving home, or boarding away is an issue that is faced by many Australian families if children are to attend secondary education. This transition forces many changes in behaviour to adjust and accept the move: so how can we aid in this transition? by being aware of and understanding the typical behaviours and coping strategies that are adopted by the young adolescent, then perhaps we can interpret what impact programmes and environments have on the individual in this situation. Only following this, would we then be able to effectively facilitate a positive experience.

Jennifer and Katrina are 3rd year students at Edith Cowan University. They are enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science and are majoring in Children Studies. Their qualification will enable them to work in a variety of positions and locations with children aged 0 - 14 years. Both students come from rural areas of Western Australia. These students have recently completed the unit CHN 3122 "Research in Families" in which a research project was undertaken, with Rosa Lincoln their Supervisor. This presentation will give the students the opportunity to share the "Research Process and their findings" to an audience that is genuinely concerned with rural education.

18."A Focus on Rural Australia for Student Teachers at the University of Ballarat "
Dr. Keith Moore, Lecturer in Education, University of Ballarat.

The teacher preparation course at the University of Ballarat incorporates a unit tiled 'Rural Australia'. This subject, that more than 85% of second year students are currently undertaking, examines the history and sociology of rural communities and schools. It is particularly designed to allow students to investigate teachers' acceptance (or rejection) locally. The contradiction that rural Australians are friendly and welcoming but can take twenty years to fully accept outsiders, is focused upon.
Each students carries out a case study of a rural town or village, and its school, as an accessible task for their 'Rural Australia' unit. This paper examines the structure of the 'Rural Australia' unit and the students' perceptions of the content.

19. "Forum: Student Reflection on Successful Rural Education"
Carrie-ann Mickan and Neralie Rowan
In 1996 South Australia's " most successful student" attended an Area School (Rural Reception to Twelve) and studied three of her six subjects using the Open Access College. Neralie and Carrie-ann similarly successful in 1995, share how it worked for them throughout their schooling.

20. "Ag-Ed (Agricultural Education)" - **1997** Winner of the **Australian Rural Education Award**
Ag-Ed is an agricultural education project which is held in conjunction with the Toowoomba Show. Ag-Ed aims to help children gain an understanding of the impact and relevance agriculture has on every day lives. Ag-Ed has two components, an Ag-Ed day which involves children in their glass groups participating in four interactive agricultural presentations on the first day of the Toowoomba Show and a teacher resource package.

Celebrating Connectedness

by

Robin Maslen

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you all today. This comes about because my good friend Steve Biddulph, author of "Manhood" a bestselling book about setting men free, was unable to be here and suggested to your organisers that I take his place. Steve has been doing a great job around Australia and overseas raising people's awareness of the need to balance the attention given to women's issues by addressing the real needs of males, particularly young boys, in our rapidly changing society.

I intend to expand this topic to address the problem of people's lack of connectedness and increasing alienation, which is not a gender specific issue, but one which is having an increasingly unhealthy impact for all of us as well as creating some special problems for males in our society.

The theme of this conference, one of celebration, implies some sort of proclamation, something to rejoice about. Unfortunately this alienated society is not a subject for celebration at the moment. So my challenge is for us all is to think of ways personally and institutionally that we can be involved in celebrating the death of alienation and the rebirth of connections between people. Connections which involve, Security, Empathy, Affirmation and Protection. Where the individual can feel unique, can experience the impact they make on others and be moved by that impact, to love and be loved. Connections between country and city, between black and white, male and female, school & community, teacher & learner, boss and worker, parent & child.

All warm and fuzzy stuff but as I hope to demonstrate, terribly important for our future well being. I hope to leave some time at the end for comment and/ or question.

My experiences over the years working in juvenile welfare and adult corrections with both the privileged and disadvantaged youth and families has brought me into contact with the widest range of behaviours including hopelessness, depression, child abuse homelessness, addiction, violence, suicide, and murder. My 40 years with Scouting has exposed me to some of these issues as well as to kids who are achieving, ambitious, happy, creative, resourceful, responsible and self disciplined. As the middle class shrinks and the gap between the haves and the have nots widens the situation at first glance looks ominous.

Of concern to most thinking people is the increase in violence in our community, the difficulty in keeping up with the pace of change, and for those who are lucky enough to work, then the problem exists of being expected to do so much more with a whole lot less whilst there are so many people, particularly young ones, out of full time employment.

Hugh Mackay a social researcher with the Commission For The Future says we have an "epidemic of insecurity" He cites two reasons for this. First, Parents of today grew up in a cold war era where they lived with fear of there being no future. A fear that someone, somewhere will push the button. At the same time they felt that economic prosperity was available to everyone who wanted it. These two conflicting views, one where everything is financially rosy, the other that tomorrow might not exist- produced a generation of people who believed that "we better have a good time now and have it fast" I can remember the

motto of some adolescents "live fast, die young and have a good looking corpse". The real tragedy being that many did just that.

Secondly. In the early seventies Mackay believes that the character of our society changed to one where everything was able to be questioned, many traditional beliefs and landmarks were challenged and rebelled against by young people. For example:-

Attitudes to Family & Marriage have changed dramatically.

The divorce rate grows from 6% to 35% and may reach the American 55% of marriages ending in divorce.

One parent families. Over 1 million children living with only one parent.

No typical family any more. Many models accepted by a large part of society.

Parenting practices. Many more demands placed on parents to do the right thing.

One of the issues that we are trying to deal with is Change. The rate of change is faster than at any other time. eg. The amount of information in a single issue of a quality newspaper today is approximately equal to the amount of information that a person in the 16th century would have assimilated in a lifetime.

Recently a visiting Information technology professor used the term "infoquake" to measure change. Like the Richter Scale to measure earthquakes each point on the scale increases by the power of 10 the amount of change. Stone tablets to paper measured 2; Paper to CD ROMs 7, Telephone lines to optic fibre 8. In the next 5 years the amount of change is predicted to be as much as has occurred in the last 50 years.

Add to these social changes, the pressures of unemployment for young people, expectations of a multicultural society, technological revolution, restructuring and redundancies, a global economy, and it is no wonder we have an epidemic of insecurity.

Our population is ageing and is increasingly fearful for their safety, at least in cities. In the 1900s there were 4 times the number of children than people over the age of 55. In the mid 80s there were more 55 yr olds and over than children and by the year 2000 there will be 11% more and by 2021 it is predicted that there will be 66% more 55 year olds than children.

Mackay believes that in trying to cope with this epidemic we have demanded more regulation, more controls and structures, eg gun laws, media censorship, anti smoking laws, environmental laws, dog laws, racial anti-vilification laws, compulsory super, to mention a few. A lawyer's smorgasbord.

No longer do we live in a village where it might be easier to deal with these changes and the insecurity they bring. A community where there is a sense of belonging, where we share space, values and concerns for each other. Some have said that we now live in a Global Village. Mackay believes that the Global Village is a misnomer. The new computer technology which heralds the Global village, the Internet, Email, faxes, mobile phones, may mislead us to believe that the transfer of data between people all over the planet is the same as communication. It is not. Data transfer is just shifting bits of information. Communication is something you do in a relationship with others.

The more time we spend with machines at the expense of time spent with others the more we threaten our sense of belonging to a community. We will start to feel fragmented - more alienated and lose a common sense of morality, of right and wrong. Our most precious resource is each other. Maybe it is time to have not only TV free days but also computer free ones as well.

Another observer, John Naisbitt in his book *Megatrends* explores a contrary and optimistic view of the technological revolution. He claims that there is a natural balancing High Tech - High touch phenomena. The more high tech - the more high touch we become.

I believe that people need people stimulation and recognition to survive and it seems that we will forego high tech for a while to get it. A famous psychiatrist and prolific writer, Eric Berne, in one of his books *Games People Play*, called this need "Recognition Hunger" and conceived the term "strokes" to describe this most basic of human hungers. Others have called these pleasant strokes, warm fuzzies and the unpleasant ones cold pricklies and show how people will go to any length to get either of them, for to be ignored is crippling, physically and emotionally. I am sure that you all can identify a student in your school that everyone knows about. It is probably because of his or her inappropriate behaviour that all staff recognise that student. See how street smart kids can be to get their daily intake of life giving strokes. If there are no fuzzies available then they will set you up to give them pricklies as these are better than being ignored.

Naisbitt cites examples where the introduction of high tech leads at the same time to more people oriented activities, eg. TV with Group Therapy; heart transplants with home births; the Video recorder with an explosion of cinemas, (30 new cinemas at the Marion Westfield shopping complex about to open); electronic shopping with shopping malls; computers in schools with demands on teachers to deal with values (perhaps the dramatic increase in Christian private schools is a part of this balancing process in the educational arena)

Unfortunately our society still exhibits the symptoms of this alienation - violence - dependence upon prescription drugs - child abuse - homelessness - suicide - road rage - & family breakdown. We have full time workers working flat out doing their job even though the number of overtime hours they work would account for half a million more jobs in a population where there are more than a million people who would like to work but can't. These workers find their connections at work rather than with those who matter most.

It is not only these society influences which break the connections between people. Psychologists have long known about the dramatic impact that much earlier influences from parenting and educational processes can have.

Before the age of 12, young people develop a lifelong script about who they are and how they will relate to others as a result of the recognition (or lack of it) that they get. On the one hand they need closeness and connections with others to be able to grow and develop in a healthy way, to work out who they are and how they should behave. On the other hand because of the parenting they receive may be unwilling or unable to behave in a way that will satisfy their recognition hunger in a positive way. So we get the misfits, the dropouts, the trouble makers, the truants, the shy and frightened ones, those who are rebellious or overly compliant as well as those who keep their feelings closed, and avoid closeness.

Young children who suffer trauma from being abandoned, or who find that getting close to a carer leads to pain or discomfort soon learn to adapt to that uncaring environment and to shut down on their natural desire to be close. They lose their trust in others and to protect themselves from further hurt behave in ways to reinforce others to continue hurting them. To

reverse this process they need strong doses of consistent and unconditional caring and closeness. Strong permission that to be close can be safe and even pleasurable

One researcher - James Prescott - wrote about this phenomena over 20 years ago. He stated that "the principal cause of human violence is a lack of bodily pleasure during the formative years of life. Laboratory experiments and cross cultural surveys demonstrated that individuals and societies which experience and promote physical pleasure are also peaceful....."

He believes that a nation can reduce crime and violence in the future by providing more pleasure for its infants and young people. "....Unless the causes of violence are isolated and treated we will continue to live in a world of fear and apprehension. Many advocate get tough policies as the best way to reduce crime, but because the causes of violence lie in our basic values and the way we bring up children this will not solve the problem...."

"Physically affectionate human societies are unlikely to be physically violent."....

" Pleasure and violence have a reciprocal relationship. The presence of one inhibits the other."

A few years ago I talked with a woman, Jean Liedloff, who had lived for several years with stone age Indians deep in the South American jungle. Jean wrote a book called the *Continuum Concept*. She reported that the children in this tribe were uniformly well behaved, never fought, were never punished, always obeyed happily and instantly. Babies in the tribe were carried around full time by their mothers for their first 6 - 8 months. The older infant was always present but rarely the centre of attention. Simply just there, constantly experiencing things, safely being held. The parenting process expected the child to evolve on a natural continuum and in a very close relationship with its caretakers in the first years of life.

Jean evolved the Continuum Concept which explained that the design of each individual was a reflection of the experience it expected to encounter. Lungs expect air, eyes - light when best needed, ears - vibrations that make sense, one sex expects there to be another. When the expected does not take place, corrective or compensatory tendencies make an effort to restore stability. Western society has interrupted this continuum in it's child rearing practices to it's detriment.

I remember an obedience experiment when studying psychology. Milgram's Experiment I think it was called. It involved students being paid to administer an electric shock to subjects in an adjoining room. The experiment was rigged so that no actual shock was given but the accomplice acted as though it was. One of the surprising results was that the further away the student was from the victim, ie could not see or hear them, the more voltage they were willing to apply. Even sufficient to seriously hurt or kill. The closer the victim eg. the student able to see or to touch the victim the less they were willing to inflict pain or be involved. The student was even more unwilling if they had some sort of group support alongside of them during the experiment. Closeness negates or makes it harder to hurt others.

So to me it seems logical to conclude that if we want a non harmful family, community, institution or society that we need to address the issues of closeness at the time of child rearing as well as in the ways we structure our institutions to function. When I established the two project centres in Adelaide for young adolescent offenders and for children with severe school behavioural problems the staff were trained to reparent the young people to attempt to overcome the past very negative parental and teacher influences. They modelled with each other the importance of close contact, of not reinforcing negative inappropriate behaviour. Kids were hugged, physically touched in non intrusive ways, were taught how to get positive

attention physically and verbally. At one stage one of the groups even felt comfortable enough to give each other body massages. Their violent and disruptive behaviour stopped. In a Kids Shelter, we obtained the same results with severely abused and suicidal street kids who responded to strong caring confrontation, intensive and continual physical touching. They stopped running, stopped hurting themselves and ceased their suicidal behaviour. Similar reports from a variety of places around the world showed the therapeutic value of physical closeness in undoing past trauma with these damaged young people.

Outdoor adventure camps for troubled youth have for years shown the beneficial effects of programs where challenge, stimulation and caring closeness is present. The most serious drug addicts have been most successfully treated in programs like Synanon where closeness and confrontation have been key elements. I have visited prison programs overseas for the most violent dangerous offenders. Programs which have inmates caring and holding each other, where trust can be established.

Unfortunately in many of our social institutions, schools, clubs, work places there is a fear of closeness. We regulate or forbid touch for fear of recrimination, of being labelled harassing or abusive. It is as though we can't understand or teach the difference between harmful contact and caring and non intrusive contact and so to be on the safe side we prohibit all but the most superficial.

There is a growing awareness in the literature and in management about the need to develop a people oriented culture where relationship skills are seen as paramount for the success of the business and for the happiness of the individual. Writers like Stephen Covey, author of several books one best seller being *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People*, almost make a religion about this issue.

I have even had fathers come to me for counselling and in the process enquire about whether it is safe to hug their teenage daughters. They are unsure and insecure about this. They get sexuality mixed up with sensuality and so keep their distance. So the daughter goes without or produces a behaviour either sexually provocative, rebellious or overly compliant to get some attention from dad.

Steve Biddulph, in his book *Manhood*, claims that men have some special burdens that have not been acknowledged. Feminism has brought the possibility of opening up the sensitive side of men. They have become more thoughtful, more caring. They are not interested in starting wars or harming the earth and will sleep in the damp patch. (Although in my business contacts as a management consultant I don't see any Movement as strong as the Women's Movement to feel that this enlightenment has spread very far yet.)

Something's wrong. These feminised men are life preserving not life giving. Some have become wimps, stuck trying to be more sensitive but only having female models to copy from. Females can't teach men about male's feelings. This is not to denigrate the important part and tremendous influence that mothers have on young boys. One can see this influence still playing a part with many of our violent adult prisoners who can be calmed downed by a mother or mother substitute when they are acting out.

Robert Bly, in his book *Iron John*, describes the fifties man as loyal hardworking, supported his wife and children, and admired discipline, likes football, is aggressive and will fight for his country. What was lacking were actions without feelings.

"Do you love me dear?" "she asks ..... "Define Love" he responds.

They didn't know how to feel because feelings come from the inside.

Men put on a tough exterior and act out a role- Women act from the inside. Men feel that there must be more but don't know how to get to it except for brief tastes of passion and glory in being alive, eg, alone on the top of a mountain, surviving a life threatening trauma, being with a woman in a certain kind of way.

As men struggled on we began to discover in men's groups, after the facade of anger and hate was lifted, that men were lonely and sad. Tears of grief not angry outbursts predominated. Just as women had to overcome oppression, and to learn to use their anger in productive ways. Males had to learn to grieve, to deal with their isolation and loneliness, their compulsive competition and their lifelong emotional illiteracy. Competition has it's roots in the belief that there isn't enough to go around. Their angry facade covered their scare that there wouldn't be enough love to go around.

Bly found that many males were "father hungry". There was a deep biological need for strong, humorous, hairy, sweaty, caring, intelligent masculine input. The average time spent by fathers and sons together is 6 mins a day. So how can this need be satisfied?

Steve recommends "fixing it with your father," seeking that reconciliation, that sense of connectedness, and in his book discusses ways to go about this.

In any process of reconciliation though there are two issues which must be faced for a successful resolution. One of "Apology" and one of "Forgiveness". In our nation's struggle with the Aboriginal Reconciliation process we hear lots about apology and nothing about forgiveness. To move on both issues will need to be addressed in personal as well as national conflict situations.

Steve claims that boys are grossly underfathered. They often have no mentor figures to help them grow into mature men. Male networks are awkward and lacking in intimacy. Women learn to network to get close to each other. Boys never find out the inner world of older men and so copy the image they see on the outside which they then act out to prove they are a man. The John Wayne type.

Boys who are underfathered come in two types. Macho with aggressive clothes, violent toys, carrying weapons, highly competitive and with low quality relationships. Or a "mummy's boy," under confident, depressed often bedwetting, picked on and having irrational fears.

Bly states "A boy cannot change into a man without the intervention of the older men". Even the best fathers cannot raise their sons alone. They need help from other men. In tribal situations the whole male community gets involved.

One of the most important issues for a boy to deal with is to be able to separate emotionally from his mother. When men stopped working alongside of wives and children in their villages and farms and went to work in factories, mines and offices, boys began being raised by women.

A boy needs to needs to experience himself as profoundly independent of his mother's emotional states, her needs and her sexual identity. He has more possibility to accomplish these tasks when he has a strong, and present father or some other significant male in his life. He needs far more than 6 mins a day.

I wonder if rural communities where sons and fathers might see each other a lot more have some advantages in this area. I also wonder about the impact of young adolescents being sent away to boarding school at such a critical time in the development of their personality.

Steve describes some statistics about being a man in the 90's to show that maybe it is not a man's world after all

Males live on average 6 years less than women.
Women initiate divorce in 4 out 5 cases.
90% of convicted violent acts will be carried out by men.
70% of victims of violent acts will be men.
90% of children in schools with behaviour problems are boys.
Males comprise over 90% of inmates in gaols.
One in seven boys will experience sexual assault before 18 yrs.
Adolescent suicide rates have doubled in the past 10 yrs and men and boys commit suicide 5 times more frequently than women.
Males have unique health problems with Mondays being the most common time for heart attacks to occur.

Futurist, Dr Peter Ellyard, talks about our "emerging spaceship culture". A new planetary culture. One within which we are becoming more interdependent and co-operative globally. Whilst there will still be tribal wars within the planet, global trading, fear of global ecological disasters and a new planetary security system will demand that we see ourselves as a spaceship within which individuals will cease to identify themselves nationally, eg as Australian, English, American, or European. Six year olds of today who will take on jobs in 2010 that haven't yet been invented, will identify themselves with their planet as much as their nation.

Peter describes the characteristics of this spaceship culture as Interdependent, Communitarian, Democratic; with humanity a part of nature, sustainable lifestyles, gender equality, intercultural and interracial tolerance, conflicts resolved through negotiation and a reliance on security rather than defence.

This emerging spaceship culture will force all of us to review what it means to be male and to make some changes to our education and learning. Incidents like the Pt Arthur massacre is where the cowboy has gone rampant in the spaceship.

Males will need to change from Cowboys to Cosmonauts and learn to develop the characteristics mentioned above. We need a new model of spaceship masculinity. Peter Singer in his book *The Expanding Circle*, suggests we develop "Circles of Concern" and Robert Bly proposes that we reinvent male Initiation as two ways to bring about this change.

Singer's Circle of Concern expands the ancient act of embracing and caring for one kind of humanity. This act, in the past, has led to racial and cultural intolerance. This new Circle of Concern needs to embrace all of humanity and cross the boundaries around our species. We are already witnessing this with programs like Whale Watch. Schools should encourage students to map their own Circles of Concern and to have individuals work on increasing these.

Bly says that by abandoning initiation for males into adulthood we have incurred an enormous social cost. We have a society full of men running around in boy's bodies. Women at puberty have a biological milestone. Males have nothing. Most indigenous cultures chose puberty as

the educational step into adulthood. The need is still there and can be seen in some of the rites and rituals of street gangs. Our big wars in the past provided an opportunity for young men to become adults. They drove big tanks, ships, vehicles and aeroplanes whilst still in their teens. They became leaders & heroes and killed their enemies. Today's youth tries to do the same on our local streets in hot cars and motor bikes, terrorising others and becoming a big man. The final initiation for many young offenders is to get locked up then they have made it. Only by then, they are well and truly into the ever engulfing and mind destroying correctional system.

Young Indians in some American gaols have been allowed to develop "Sweat Lodges" where they undergo traditional initiation rites of passage. We have nothing to equal this.

Initiation serves to teach cultural values and myths to prepare boys for responsible adulthood. It channels youthful aggressiveness into useful and productive pursuits. It creates men who as warriors use their physical strength for noble purposes rather than for self gratification. It teaches respect for self and others and develops self esteem and an understanding of the richness of culture and human experience. It includes significant tests of skill, self reliance and achievement.

How to bring all of this to some ending? Perhaps by offering a few thoughts for future action that have arisen in my mind as I have been writing this speech.

Looking at Institutional possibilities.

I am aware of the important role that an organisation like SPERA has in breaking down the barriers and isolation of the workers in Rural settings. Even more important when so many great achievements are accomplished by these workers and not often given the recognition that they deserve. You are doing a great job in increasing connectedness.

In my current work, at the SA Training & Education centre & in co-operation with your department I have been working with an ex-Principal Polly Eckert providing a Leadership and Management course for country staff. Our first course is almost completed with a large waiting list for the next one. It has been great to see how these teachers from isolated places have bonded so rapidly together in their learning groups. Almost like an inoculation against the alienation of distance. For a few years there will be some Federal money to continue these programs.

In another organisation, Scouting, I see tremendous opportunities for young people and their adult leaders to break down barriers not only in their personal local relationships but at events like national and world jamborees where 16,000 people from all walks of life, from all religions and cultures, live, eat, work and play together in peaceful co-operation. Scouting breaks down political barriers and gives young people opportunities for real sharing experiences in far away places like Bangladesh where Aussie kids work alongside of local young people building roads & bridges, installing toilets, carrying out rehydration of infants life saving programs. Or where young survivors from the Chernobyl disaster are hosted for a healthy holiday in Adelaide.

Scouting & Rotary Student exchange programs are another excellent way of bringing understanding of other cultures and being able to appreciate individual differences and so break down imagined and real barriers.

Schools by their very nature play a significant role in either establishing or breaking down barriers to connectedness. I know that the poor old teacher gets landed with every social ill to fix. I am reluctant to heap more on those existing pressures.

However schools could look at their systems and see how change can be introduced so that a caring environment is a part of the culture children are exposed to continually. For example, does your school have a published set of values and principles that staff and kids have developed together and are encouraged to live by? I understand that establishing Collaborative Learning Environments is one system which demands close working relationships. Introducing a Mentoring system for staff and students is another. In all our Management courses we teach participants how to find and use a mentor and, where possible, provide some basic skills for their Mentors. I know that physical touch is unfortunately a No-No in the school other than on the footy field. However in younger classrooms I have seen some very creative ways of getting around this safely for child and teacher. I am sure some of the very many creative staff could find safe ways to provide this most basic of human needs for mutual benefit.

With kids showing difficult behaviour, "Catch them doing something right" for a change.

Personally.
Find ways to give strokes - fuzzies to others. It is a great motivator and healer and you get more back. The higher up the hierarchy the more important this is to deal with the alienation of command. Learn to forgive and to heal old wounds. Work less and play more. Invent ways to spend more quality time with those close to you. If you are a dad check how many minutes a day you spend with your kids in quality time. Not lecturing or questioning but listening and being with. If you have a family check how much time you have alone in quality time with your partner. Do little unexpected things for them. Be a good Scout and do a good turn for somebody every day. Invent new ways to have more. I like one bumper sticker I saw a while ago "Have you hugged your kid today?" Set some goals to increase this time before it's too late and they leave home to become independent.

Who knows, maybe one of your students will one day help us move out of the technological and into a humanities revolution.

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Successes of a Rural University:

Whyalla Campus,

University of South Australia

by Jim Harvey:

Dean: Whyalla

Background

Australian universities have experienced major changes during the past two years. These changes have included reduced government funding, increased competition and changes to teaching - learning strategies. Universities have also been forced to respond to major changes in traditional industries and professions and to the growth of new professions (eg Information Technology and Biotechnology)

Each of these factors has tended to have a greater impact on regional universities and regional campuses of larger metropolitan universities. Funding models have been based on metropolitan patterns of high student numbers and specialised staff and facilities. Such models reward efficiencies generated by these advantages of scale. Rural and regional universities find it increasingly more difficult to offer or expand new or expensive courses such as engineering and computing. The irony is that in many cases the industries which demand these courses are located in regional and remote areas - not metropolitan areas.

The market is exercising an increasing pressure on universities. Again demographic factors such as the out-migration of young people from declining rural and regional areas have significant impact on demand for courses in regional universities. Access to a wider range of courses on many metropolitan campuses merely accelerates these trends.

Rural and isolated students tend to have generally lower levels of access and participation than all other groups (with the exception of Aboriginal Australians). These students tend to enrol in sub-degree programs such as Diplomas and Certificates. Rural students are over-represented in Agriculture (to be expected) and they tend to enrol in Education and Veterinary Science - not in Business, Law and Architecture.

Isolated students enrol predominantly in Agriculture and Education. Success for both categories is generally comparable to urban students in all fields in the courses they undertake.

There are a number of barriers to increasing the participation in higher education of people in rural, regional and isolated areas. Limited subject choice and generally poorer Year 12 outcomes of secondary education combine to produce lower tertiary entry scores for these students. Increased costs of higher education and the impact of changes to Austudy have had a significant impact on many Australian students. For rural parents reeling from the effects of drought and the negative impact of falling world prices for their commodities, the expenses incurred in sending students away for higher education are prohibitive.

ONE APPROACH: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - WHYALLA CAMPUS

Whyalla Campus has recently been confronted by many of the realities described above. In particular, the Campus has experienced a major decline in those areas related to BHP's activities. The Campus has diversified its course offerings such that the human service areas of Nursing and Social Work are now the largest programs. Business, Computer and Information Science have also replaced Engineering in terms of student enrolments.

The Campus has adopted a number of strategies based on a solution - oriented approach to the difficulties we face and by an emphasis on long-term development strategies - rather than short-term "quick fix" solutions.

1. We've accepted the reality that special pleading for increased funds does not address or solve many of our problems. We have developed plans to cut costs and increase income. We've acknowledged the potential for us to play a central role in regional development. Not only do we contribute significantly to the educational, economic, social and cultural dimensions of our wider region, but we are also a major employer, a significant consumer of local goods and services and we add value to the region's infra structure and human service development. We estimate that we generate $12 million of economic activity in Whyalla alone.

2. We have established pathways to higher education for students and communities across the region. We've done this firstly by taking higher education to five rural and isolated communities through the facilities located in our telelearning centres. These centres provide students with telecommunication, electronic communication and in two cases pc-based video communication links to the Campus and through the Campus to the rest of the University. The centres are nested in their communities: not imposed on them. Consultation, collaboration and inclusivity have underpinned the location and development of each centre.

   We have also become far more closely integrated with TAFE. We have developed a number of pathways via which TAFE courses and their students link with appropriate university courses. Examples include a dual award between the Campus's Bachelor of Business and the Spencer Institute's Certificates in Hospitality and Tourism. The TAFE Diploma in Child Care leads directly to the second year of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and we enable enrolled nurses to become registered nurses via our flexibly delivered Bachelor of Nursing degree.

3. We've tackled the issue of lower level of tertiary entry scores through the University's USANET Scheme. This innovative approach has three components: outreach, access and support. Going to university needs to be planned in advance. Outreach aims to help prospective students to consider university as a real option. Strategies employed include school visits and the Taste of Uni program. Access is improved by the special assistance provided for students in target schools. Bonus points are added to Year 12 results. All rural secondary schools are now under the scheme (although not all regional schools).

   Many rural and isolated students find going to university even more daunting than urban students. Recognising this a range of programs have been developed to assist students from USANET target schools to settle in to the university environment. These programs are designed to lead to success at university.

4. We're expanding both access to and the range of our programs. Earlier this year the University required the Campus to clarify its role in this changed environment. The Campus accepted this challenge and developed a plan which refocussed our activities on to the region. The Campus was charged with responsibilities to contribute significantly to the University's academic reputation and the achievement of key elements of its mission. Whyalla has proposed that it become a centre for excellence in the development of courses and expertise tailored to rural and remote professional practice, with an Australia-wide focus.

   The Campus has established an on-Campus Study Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Students and will work closely with the Faculty of Aboriginal and Islander Studies to better meet the educational needs of Aboriginal people across the north and west of the state. We are providing support for clusters of distance education students in rural and remote communities across the state. Finally we are planning to act as a conduit for students by offering the first year of courses on Campus, with subsequent years being taught in Adelaide.

In this short presentation I've examined the strategic choices made by a small regional campus of a large metropolitan university. I've described how the tyranny of distance is being tackled through the use of a variety of approaches. In summary I've attempted to emphasise that rural and regional universities are central players in regional development.

Summary:

Rural and regional universities play a central role in regional development. They contribute significantly to the educational, economic and social/cultural dimensions of their regions. They are major employees, significant consumers of local goods and services and add value to infra structure and human service development.

This workshop examines the strategic choices of a small regional Campus of a large metropolitan university. It describes how the tyranny of distance is being tackled through the use of a variety of approaches. The Campus has adopted a solution-oriented approach to the difficulties it faces, focusing on long-term development strategies rather than short-term 'quick fix' solutions. The session will provide examples which celebrate the Campus's increasingly important role in rural education.

Health & Safety for Young People in Rural Areas

by Stephen Parker
Project Officer, Southern Vales Community Health Service

The Health and Safety for Young People in Rural Areas project is a joint initiative between Noarlunga Health Service and the southern Vale Cluster of Secondary Schools.

The Health Service is located within the City of Noarlunga in the outer Southern coastal area of Adelaide, 35 kilometres from the central business district. It is the fastest growing council area in South Australia.

The southern region offers a wide range of economic activity. There are strong automotive, traditional manufacturing and light engineering industries. Much of this industry is located Lonsdale industrial area.

The City of Noarlunga also boasts a large rural hinterland renowned for its wine industry. McLaren Vale is the centre of a rapidly expanding, internationally recognised wine growing region.

Since the late eighties, Noarlunga Health Service has been involved in the development and implementation of a range of innovative injury prevention and health promotion programs in the local community.

Injury in the community is a concern.

I think that we would all agree that the enormous cost of work related injury and disease in Australia is far reaching both in economic and social terms.

Even though very real progress has been made to reduce workplace injury, each year in Australia some 500 deaths result from work related incidents.
As well there are 20 000 work related injuries that require more than 5 days absence from work. The total cost of these injuries is estimated at over $9 billion annually.

When you think of the staggering effect an injury can have on a person's life in a social and family setting it makes good sense to try and prevent these injuries.

It also makes good business sense to keep everyone healthy and safe. In any business the most important asset is the men and women who make up the workforce.

Agriculture is now recognised to be among the highest risk industry group for occupational injury and disease.

Young people can work in potentially hazardous farm settings at a younger age than in other industries, often with little training or experience as new employees.

Current research indicates that adolescents and young adults aged between 15-24 years are a major risk group for fatal and non-fatal injury in the workplace.

People involved in primary industry often live with their family on rural properties. The property is not only a workplace, but also a home and a play area for children.

The Heinrich Report of 1996 reports that rural industry has the highest incidence of fatalities of all industries in South Australia, with 36 rural workplace fatalities in the past 8 years. An alarming statistic is that 25% of these fatalities were children, with 9 of the children under the age of 12 years.

A community health survey, 'Injury in Noarlunga,' conducted through Noarlunga Health Service, showed that in 1992 in the city of Noarlunga there were 1212 years of mobility lost by residents as a result of injury.

The survey identified 5 priority areas to be addressed in regard to injury. The workplace was seen as being one of the most significant places for personal injury for both males and females.

For males 27% of all injuries happened at work, for women 14%.

People working in small industry and those who were self employed were seen as a vulnerable group in terms of injury.

In response to the community survey the NHS Injury Prevention in Small Industry project was formed with the goal of promoting a safer and healthier workplace in the Londale light industrial and McLaren Vale winegrowing areas of South Australia.

The Willunga District/McLaren Vale area is situated on the urban/rural fringe and is renowned for its wine industry, almond orchards and mixed farming.

The McLaren Vale wine region has 47 wineries nestled in the heart of the countryside.

The region is fact becoming internationally recognised as a premium wine growing areas in the world.

A large percentage of these wineries are small, family owned businesses which date back to the late 1800's.

With the very strong push for international recognition of the Australian wine industry, wineries in the McLaren Vale area identify health and safety as a priority in complementing total quality management.

In this region Noarlunga Health Service has established close networks with the community, especially in Farm Safety projects.

A number of Farm Safety projects targeting local primary producers, adopted a safe working practices theme with three main components, safe machine and tool use, manual handling and safe use of chemicals.

Hardware store promotions, retail staff training, health screenings at farm field days and community workshops, including a course on working safely with chainsaws and first aid were built into this program. Through these initiatives strong links with the McLaren Vale Winemakers were developed.

The Injury Prevention in Small Industry project in the McLaren Vale area worked closely with five local wineries.

At the conclusion of the funding period, certainly a great deal had been achieved in raising awareness of health and safety issues. However, many of these activities were "one off" events and it was difficult to claim real and effective sustainability for the program.

In education circles they talk about "violins in the cupboard" to describe the demise of flourishing programs which have ended due to the individual driving the program moving on, or the source of funding drying up. Perhaps with small business an analogy could be "health and safety in the toolbox".

Traditional Occupational Health and Safety recommendations and regulations, developed to reduce injury in the Australian workplace, appear to have a minimal impact within the confines and day to day operation in small business.

Strategies of sending out legislative documents or emotive posters urging people to be safe have a place in a combined program, but in terms of changing behaviour or increasing knowledge skills and understandings within the community they appear costly and limited in terms of changing behaviour or increasing knowledge skills and understandings within the community.

It was at this stage that Noarlunga Health Service turned its focus and resources to the education of young people in the community in an attempt to make them catalysts and "agents of change" for health and safety within the local community. Why?

The Policy and Strategic Directions for the Health of Young People in SA states that young people in rural areas suffer relative disadvantage in terms of access of opportunity to employment, education and health services available to their urban counterparts.

It also states that young people entering the workforce should be provided with information, education and training about Occupational Health and Safety and the minimisation of injury or disease.

The Australian Agriculture Health Unit's report on Farm Injuries in Adolescents and Young Adults, highlights that the most important source of safety education for young people in primary industry settings are educational programs conducted through the school environment. The report recommends improved safety training, particularly school teachers in the rural community.

The **Finn Report** states that schools should be providing and promoting student programs which introduce students to a broad occupational and industry area through the provision of high quality education, training and resources.

It would be true to say that to this date very little has been actually undertaken in directing specific health and safety programs towards the needs of young people.

With the potential increase in employment opportunities in the Willunga area due to viticulture and tourism, and the high level of youth unemployment in the local area (28%) a relevant Health and Safety Vocational Education and Training program (VET) has the potential to increase employment opportunities for young people.

This health and safety focus in seen as being relevant and effective as it is closely linked to local priorities and has the support of the Willunga High School, local Wine Makers Association, representatives of the Grapegrowers, the local community and the health sector.

Extensive consultations occurred between the Southern Vales Community Health Service and VET teaching staff from Willunga High School regarding the development of health and safety educational materials, training aids and relevant programs to help young county people more aware of the dangers in their every day lives.

The project worked with teachers, students, parent/caregivers and local industry in accessing current information and further developing resources to develop skills in identifying and addressing rural safety hazards.

The resources were desk-top published in draft form suitable for inclusion within the SACE Stage 1 Vocational Education Training Program at Willunga High School.

These resources were trialed by 80 students and Occupational Health and Safety accredited teachers during the first term of the 1997 school year.

To determine that the initial resource material was relevant to student learning and needs, extensive classroom research feedback was sought from participating students, teachers and local industry.

Representatives from education and health and safety organisations eg. WorkCover, Department for Education and Children's Service, TAFE were also consulted to determine the suitability of the materials, the impact of the kit, and improvements.

Reactions to this unique Health and Safety resource from a wide variety of sources indicate that the material is of great value in the delivery of health and safety programs within the VET curriculum, especially those vocational course in rural settings.

Through the complementary development, design and delivery of this health and safety curriculum on the Web Site young people throughout South Australia will be able to take part in onsite health and safety programs and have access to developed educational resources.

Young people will have the opportunity to acquire lifelong health and safety practices, skills and knowledge relevant to their environment and potential employment.

The delivery of the program is an electronic format will make the material relevant accessible to not only those in educational settings but to a wide range of the SA community, including farmers and families in geographically isolated areas.

This interactive Web Site will be enhanced by the use of contemporary multimedia including the use of high quality sound recordings, colour and black and white photographs, animated sequences and access to a relevant data base.

In this landscape participants will be able to navigate and discover their own study pathway. Interaction with the program will be though selecting courses of action, making choices from menus.

Through the ability to compare and contrast, students receive immediate feedback through their interactions and become active participants in the education process.

The Rural Safety Web Site will meet curriculum needs and present valuable resource material in an exiting and stimulating manner.

This educational resource will address current national Occupational Health and Safety practices particularly through the creation of new information delivered by the Internet The Rural Site Web Site
will represent a first in educating young people in the area of Occupational Health and Safety on rural properties and will assist learners to understand and explore health and safety in rural workplaces.

Self-Esteem in Rural Schools: Dreams and Aspirations

Deidra J Young
Curtin University of Technology
Perth, Western Australia

Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of the self-concept (self-esteem), the classroom learning environment and socioeconomic status on student aspirations attending rural and urban schools.

There are three aspects of student life which together drive the student's expected future as a successful person: determination to achieve their desired goals, belief in their ability to achieve these goals and the ability which would match these goals. In this study, these three aspects will be referred to respectively as *Ambition*, *Self-Concept* and *Achievement*. The inter-relationships between these three student outcomes are not well known, nor documented in the literature, so this researcher selected the latent variable structural equation model as the model of choice which would adequately account for the measurement error within each of these outcomes, while simultaneously estimating the effect of each outcome. The effect of the classroom upon these student outcomes is investigated here by estimating the effect of the *Classroom Learning Environment*. In this investigation, the student's background was controlled for by including a measure of *Socioeconomic Status*.

Of singular importance is the assertion that rural students are disadvantaged by their location, culture and lack of access to similar facilities as their counterparts living in the city. However, rural/urban differences in student outcomes are not easily understood. That rural schools may be somehow inferior has already been abandoned as a valid claim in understanding these differences. Socioeconomic problems penetrate both the city schools and the country schools, and so socioeconomic measures must be included in any analysis of these differences.

In this study, the relationships between the three student outcomes were examined for both rural and urban schools, with the effects compared using the multi-sample analysis procedure.

Background Literature to Rural Education

Dreams and Aspirations

This discussion is grounded in a theoretical framework developed by Sizer (1996) and Quaglia and Cobb (1996) who have inspired this article and these analyses. While Sizer points to the student with dreams and aspirations - for Sizer it is the teacher who figures out how to stoke a student's little fire. Conceptualisation of aspirations by Quaglia and Cobb is "a student's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals" (1996, p. 130).

> This construct of aspirations has two major underpinnings: *inspiration and ambitions*. Inspiration reflects that an activity is exciting and enjoyable to the individual and the awareness of being fully and richly involved in life here and now. It is depicted by an individual who becomes involved in an activity for its intrinsic value and enjoyment. An individual with a high level of inspiration is one who believes an activity is useful and enjoyable. Ambitions represent the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It reflects individuals' perceptions that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for the future. (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996, p. 130)

Quaglia and Cobb asked how the student aspirations interact with their environment, both at school and at home. How does the school climate influence student aspirations? What conditions appear to effect changes in the way students view the work they do in school and the goals they set for their future? The research presented here is posited within this framework. That schools can help foster aspirations, that there remains a student characteristic which drives their goals and aspirations and that both the home and school environments can influence these aspirations will be discussed here.

Before moving on from Quaglia and Cobb, a final note. Aspirations are qualified by experiences of success

and failure and by social pressures to aim high and do well. Social comparison theory points to cultural standards which bear down upon these aspirations, pressuring students to conform and placing a ceiling upon them.

> For a child to dream is such a heralded notion. But how often do we as educators encourage students to dream, yet overlook what it will take in the present to realize those dreams? (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996, p. 131)

More Aspirations

Occupational and educational aspirations of rural young people is of considerable importance to rural Australians. It is not enough to have the right attitude and the top tertiary entrance examination score, if the student faces insurmountable barriers to accessing further education and employment. However, in conducting research with a number of rural Australian teachers previously, many teachers felt that students' aspirations were too high! That is, these students were trying to sit tertiary examinations in Year 12 when the teachers did not feel that these students had any hope of gaining a high enough score to get into a university. Of course, this is anecdotal evidence and little research has been conducted in rural schools to follow student aspirations. Stringfield and Teddlie's exemplar research into 16 paired rural and urban schools suggested that teachers in rural schools had higher expectations for their students (Stringfield & Teddlie, 1991).

The problems faced by Australian rural students are confounded. Firstly, when these students grow from adolescence to mature adulthood, they also must face the reality that there is little for them in their town/farm/rural area. In order for these students to attain their potential in life choices, they must make a choice. Either they can stay with their families in their rural location and enjoy the rural lifestyle they are accustomed to, or they must move to the city to either look for work or further their education in vocational colleges or university. It is obvious to these students that education will expand and fulfil their lives; often parents send their children to boarding schools in the city in order to prepare them for the new changes which lie ahead. Unfortunately, some of these students, who are accepted into higher education courses, become extremely lonely and disheartened and return to their rural home. Of course many others are keen to leave home and become independent. It appears that this is sometimes related to the social network which rural students develop when they arrive in the city. Hektner attempted to disentangle the rural young person's aspiration for social mobility and preferences for residing in rural locations (Hektner, 1995). In his study of midwestern US schools, Hektner found a substantial amount of conflict experienced by rural students in choosing to leave or stay at home. Rural students were more likely to have conflicting aspirations about wanting to live at or near home and wanting to "move out in order to move up".

Stevens' investigation of influences on vocational choices of senior high school students in a rural community demonstrated that rural students have to make career decisions at an earlier age than urban students (Stevens, 1995). This study also found a significant difference between the rural working class and the rural middle class. That is, parents who are able to send their children to boarding schools in order to complete the final two years of high school did so from a superior financial base. In the rural school which Stevens' studied, there was negligible provision for students to complete their high school education, with the result that the working class families were disadvantaged and unlikely/unable to send their children to boarding schools. Further, Stevens' noted a difference in the students' perceptions of the world and their ability to cope in an urban school environment. Many rural students were supplied with inadequate information and counselling in order to choose their school subjects for their chosen occupations and also experienced conflict regarding the superiority of the urban lifestyle which lay before them. These findings are similar to McCracken and Barcinas (1991), whose study of rural schools in Ohio revealed that rural students tended to be more homogeneous, come from larger families and have lower socioeconomic status. Rural parents tended to have a lower educational attainment and were less likely to expect their children to attain an education beyond high school. McCracken maintained that these parental and home influences helped to explain why rural students chose lower educational courses. However, rural youth were also more likely to select vocations which they had been able to observe or experience, such as agricultural college or technical colleges. Students in rural areas had lower income expectations, did not observe many high-income workers and those students who were bright and capable tended to be sent away to complete their education. The discrepancy in educational aspirations between rural and non-rural students seems clear, yet the reasons for it are not. Initiatives to raise students' aspirations in rural settings have had limited research foundations. However, it is the hope of a number of researchers that research can be developed which can make a difference both to the research field and to the student (Walberg, 1989; Quaglia, 1989; Cobb, McIntire & Pratt, 1989; Reid, 1989; McCaul, 1989; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Breen, 1989; Hansen & McIntire, 1989; Preble, Phillips & McGinley, 1989; Sherwood, 1989).

There appears to be a distinct relationship between socioeconomic status, occupational aspirations and

educational aspirations and this theme has been the subject of research by Haller and Virkler (1993). These important relationships framed this research study of the psychological, socioeconomic and classroom influences on occupational aspirations and educational aspirations.

Self-Concept/Self-Esteem

In previous research about self-concept (commonly referred to as self-esteem), the multidimensional nature has been well documented (Byrne, 1984; Hattie, 1992; Marsh, 1990, 1993; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). That is, self-concept consists of a number of facets but it is unclear how these facets aggregate into higher order factors. Marsh's facets include physical abilities and sport, physical appearance, relationship with peers, relationships with parents, reading self-concept, mathematics self-concept and self-concept in all school subjects. The academic components of the model have been the focus of attention in relationship to external constructs, such as academic achievement. We included two components of the Marsh Self Description Questionnaire (SDQII) designed to measure adolescent self-concepts (Marsh, 1992). Hattie's review of the literature and research into Self-Concept is well documented in his monograph (1992).

In the literature, the relationships between Self-Concept, Ambition and the Classroom Learning Environment were not well understood. While it was expected that the Classroom may influence student Self-Concept and student Ambition, causality has not been documented. Further, these relationships have not been investigated in rural school settings. This study sought to address these issues using a path analytic technique which did not assume causality and could cope with measurement error.

Included in this study, were two measures of Self-Concept, namely, General Self-Concept and School Self-Concept. Both of these two measures are presented in Table 1. The General Self-Concept scale describes the student's feelings about himself/herself. There are both negative and positive statements related to success and failure in life. The School Self-Concept scale measures the student's perceptions about their academic ability and potential to be a success at school. In this paper, this scale will be referred to as academic self-concept or school self-concept.

Table 1. Description of Items in the Student Self-Concept Scale

STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT SCALES

SCALE	*ITEMS*
General Self-Concept Items	Overall, I have a lot to be proud of.
	Overall, I am no good.
	Most things I do, I do well.
	Nothing I do ever seems to turn out right.
	Overall, most things I do turn out well.
	I don't have much to be proud of.
	I can do things as well as most people.
	I feel that my life is not very useful.
	If I really try, I can do almost anything I want to do.
	Overall, I'm a failure.
School Self-Concept Items	People come to me for help in most school subjects.
	I'm too stupid at school to get into a good university.
	If I work really hard I could be one of the best students in my school year.
	I get bad marks in most school subjects.
	I learn things quickly in most school subjects.
	I am stupid at most school subjects.
	I do well in tests in most school subjects.
	I have trouble with most school subjects.
	I'm good at most school subjects.
	Most school subjects are just too hard for me.

Science and Mathematics Achievement

For the purposes of this study, a relatively simple multiple-choice test of mathematics and science was employed. This test had already been validated internationally for use in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for 13-14 year old students. The TIMSS tested and questioned students, teachers and schools in 200 schools throughout Australia and in 50 other countries. The results of the TIMSS are available from the Australian Council for Educational Research (Lokan, Ford & Greenwood, 1996) and international findings may be viewed at http://wwwcsteep.bc.edu/timss.

Three different rotated forms of the possible eight tests available were used and the open-ended/free response part of the test was not used due to time constraints. There were 18 mathematics test items and 18 science test items which had to be completed in 45 minutes. There was reading time and example test items provided prior to the commencement of the test.

Analysis of the test items involved a procedure called Rasch Modelling which scores the test items and then estimates the student's ability on that test item as a function of the difficulty of the test item and the student responses to other test items. The result is a score which has a range from approximately -3.10 to +4.10. The final science and mathematics achievement measures were constructed using the Rasch Model.

The Classroom Learning Environment

That classes and schools differ in terms of their learning environments, which in turn influence student achievement has been demonstrated by Hattie (1987) who showed that 20% of students in desirable climates are better off than students in average classrooms. In the last 25 years there have been instruments developed for a range of classroom contexts, such as individualised classrooms (Fraser, 1990) and constructivist classrooms (Taylor, Dawson & Fraser, 1995). These instruments have been employed in a range of studies, with different instruments and scales used in particular studies. Recently, Fraser, Fisher and McRobbie (1996) began the development of a new learning environment instrument which incorporates scales that have been shown in previous studies to be significant predictors of outcomes (Fraser, 1994) and additional scales to accommodate recent developments and concerns in classroom learning, such as equity issues and the promotion of understanding rather than rote memorisation. The first version of the new instrument contained the following 9 scales, each scale containing 10 items: *Student Cohesiveness, Teacher Support, Involvement, Autonomy/Independence, Investigation, Task Orientation, Cooperation, Equity and Understanding*. The new instrument employed the same five-point Likert response scale (Almost Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Almost Always) as used in some previous instruments.

For the purposes of this study, we used 5 of these scales in the student questionnaire, that is, *Student Cohesiveness, Teacher Support, Involvement, Task Orientation* and *Cooperation* (see Table 2). Subsequent analyses by Fraser, Fisher and McRobbie (1996) have demonstrated that the scales *Autonomy/Independence* and *Equity and Understanding* were not reliable.

Table 2. Description of Scales in the CLES and Example Items

CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
SCALE	*EXAMPLE ITEM*
Student cohesiveness	Friendships are made among students in this class.
Teacher support	The teacher goes out of his/her way to help students.
Student involvement	Students talk with each other about how to solve problems.
Task orientation	Class assignments are clear so everyone knows what to do.
Cooperation	Students share their books and other resources with each other when doing assignments.

Socioeconomic Status

There were four observed variables which were considered as measures of socioeconomic status: Mother's Occupation, Mother's Education, Father's Occupation and Father's Education. These are typically used as indicators of the student's home background and was important to control for socioeconomic status. The combination of these four variables is dependent upon the loading of each measure and the reliability of the final composite socioeconomic status. The effect of socioeconomic status upon student outcomes has been well documented previously, with the relationship between rurality and socioeconomic status of concern to educational researchers. In previous research, differences in rural/non-rural student outcomes such as achievement may be accounted for by the associated differences in socioeconomic status.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of the Classroom Learning Environment on student aspirations and achievement?
2. What is the effect of Socioeconomic Status on student aspirations and achievement?
3. What is the effect of Self-Esteem/Self-Concept on student aspirations and achievement?
4. Does a model which explains the relationship between student aspirations, achievement, self-esteem, socioeconomic status and the classroom learning environment, differ for rural and urban schools?

Research Design: Western Australian School Effectiveness Study [WASES]

This research study, the Western Australian School Effectiveness Study [WASES], involves three phases. In the *First Phase*, the survey instruments were developed and piloted in two schools (1995).

In the *Second Phase*, a longitudinal survey is being conducted in 28 Western Australian high schools over a three year period. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the school and classroom climate and characteristics of effective schools in differential contexts. Because the growth model is particularly useful for measuring change over time in student outcomes, while controlling for other influencing variables which may also change over time, the same students at the same schools will be surveyed over a period of three years (1996 to 1998). This phase is called WASES-II for 1996, WASES-III for 1997 and WASES-IV for 1998 and is being funded in part by the Australian Research Council and the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). Finally, in the *Third Phase*, a case study approach will be used to examine some exceptionally effective and ineffective schools in the rural and urban locations of Western Australia (1997 to 1999). In this paper, some findings from data collected in the 1996 cohort (Second Phase) are presented.

Sample

Western Australian schools are located in a variety of locations, which have previously been categorized into three groups in other analyses (Tomlinson, 1994; Young, 1994a, 1994b): metropolitan Perth, rural and remote. Unfortunately, these three categories did not account for rural cities and other types of rural locations (similarly for the remote category). Subsequently, these categories have been expanded by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (DPIE, 1994) into seven categories, five of which were then used in this study (Table 3a). The five categories were Metropolitan (Capital City), Small Rural Centres, Other Rural Areas, Remote Centres and Other Remote Areas and these were incorporated into this study. In Western Australia, only five categories were applicable.

Table 3a. Rural location categories.

Classification	Category	Population Size
Metropolitan:	Capital City	
	Other Metropolitan Centre	urban centre pop ≥ 100,000
Rural:	Large Rural Centres	urban centre pop 25,000 - 99,999
	Small Rural Centres	urban centre pop 10,000 - 24,999
	Other Rural Areas	< 10,000
Remote:	Remote Centres	urban centre pop ≥ 5,000
	Other Remote Areas	< 5,000

Sampling techniques used in this study were developed by Kish (1965) and further refined by Ross (1976, 1987). An important feature of this study involves the inclusion of Non-government schools. These included Catholic, Anglican and other types of Non-government schools, although no stratification was used for these school types. There were 3397 students in the achieved sample of students from 28 schools (see Table 3b), with representation from five rural categories: Perth (Metropolitan/Urban/Suburban), Small Rural Centres, Other Rural Areas, Remote Centres and Other Remote Areas.

Table 3b. Sample size by rural location.

Sample Size	Perth	Small Rural Centre	Other Rural Area	Remote Centre	Other Remote Area	Total Students
Students	619	747	1013	633	385	3397
Schools	4	6	9	5	4	28

Methodology: Congeneric Measurement Models and Reliability

Jöreskog (1971) proposed the congeneric measurement model for the formation of latent traits because indicators often contribute differently to the composite. When it is assumed that the contribution of each indicator is equal, then the composite scale is constructed by adding the indicator values. This summing of indicators may result in reduced reliability.

> If the measures being added do not reflect the same generic true score, then the resulting composite scale lacks validity. (Holmes-Smith & Rowe, 1994)

In the congeneric measurement model, each observed indicator contributes to a true score with varying degrees. Each contribution is called Lambda, which is a regression coefficient. Further, the error variances are allowed to vary or differ and these are called Theta Delta. The advantages of fitting the congeneric measurement models to large data sets have been described by Holmes-Smith and Rowe:

- a fitted congeneric model allows large numbers of like, observed variables to be reduced to a single composite scale for use in further analyses such as structural equation models or multilevel models
- fitting a congeneric measurement model allows for differences in the degree to which each individual measure contributes to the overall composite scale (Fleishman & Benson, 1987)

- the fit statistic for the congeneric model is a quasi test of validity; that is the indicator variables must be all of similar kind, represent the same generic true score or a single latent trait

For the purposes of this investigation, a two-factor congeneric measurement model was estimated for Socioeconomic Status and the Classroom Learning Environment. These two composites were measured using more than two observed indicators, making a one-factor model possible to measure. However, a three-factor congeneric measurement model was estimated for the combination of Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement. Each of these composites were measured with two indicators and a one-factor measurement model was not possible due to the negative degrees of freedom. These models are now described in the following sections of this paper. The coding used for the indicator variables is detailed in Appendix I.

The measurement model for X is described in Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996; p. 123-124) Submodel 1 as:

$$X = \Lambda\xi + \delta$$

where

$X' = (X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_q)$ are the observed or measured variables,

Λ is the matrix Λ_x of the general model,

$\xi' = (\xi_1, \xi_2, \ldots, \xi_n)$ are the latent or unobserved variables, and

$\delta' = (\delta_1, \delta_2, \ldots, \delta_q)$ are error variances.

Jöreskog and Sörbom further explain that this measurement model assumes that the ξ's and δ's are random variables with zero means, the δ's are uncorrelated with the ξ's and all observed variables are measured in deviations from their means. The measurement model represents the regression of **x** on ξ and the element λ_{ij} of Λ is the partial regression coefficient of ξ_j in the regression of X_i on $\xi_1, \xi_2, \ldots, \xi_n$.

The covariance matrix of x is

$$\Sigma = \Lambda\Phi\Lambda' + \Theta$$

where Φ and Θ are the covariance matrices of ξ and δ, respectively.

In the standardized solution, used in these analyses, the ξ-variables have unit variance and Φ is a correlation matrix.

A Three-Factor Congeneric Measurement Model: Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement

In this analysis, six observed variables were used to estimate the three latent traits. Ambition was a latent trait estimated by two ordinal indicator variables, expected level of education (Ed) and expected occupation (Expocc). Self-Concept was estimated by the continuous observed variables School Self-Concept (Selfsch) and General Self-Concept (Selfgen). Achievement was estimated by the continuous measures Mathematics Achievement (Maths) and Science Achievement (Science).

The measured (observed) variables making up the three latent traits are:

x_1 = expected level of education
x_2 = expected occupation
x_3 = school self-concept
x_4 = general self-concept
x_5 = mathematics achievement
x_6 = science achievement

The path diagram for this three-factor measurement model is given in Figure 1.

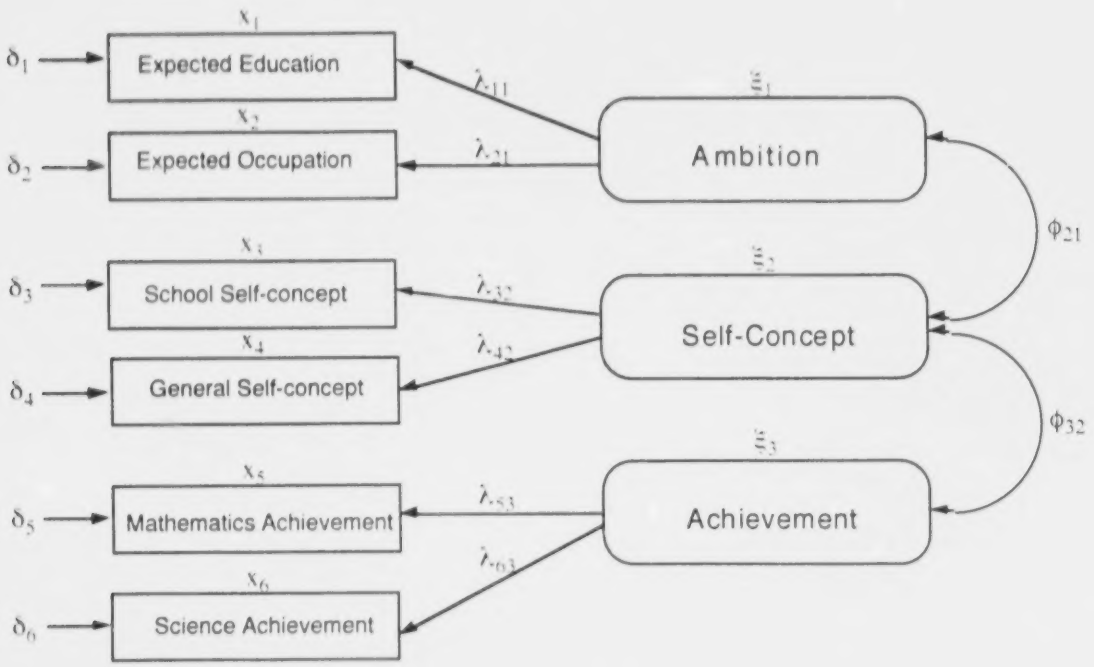

Figure 1. The Three-Factor Measurement Model for Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement.

This model (Figure 1) included the estimated lambda matrix Λ and phi correlation matrix Φ, where the three latent variables were standardized.

The generalised least squares (GLS) and maximum-likelihood (ML) methods available in LISREL and their chi-square values and standard errors are based upon the assumption that the observed variables have a multivariate normal distribution. However, the weighted least squares (WLS) is asymptotically distribution free and a much preferable method for estimation when the observed variables are ordinal in nature. It should be noted that this method is very time-consuming and demands large amounts of memory when the number of variables is large (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996, p. 18-29).

The weighted least squares method was used to estimate this model, with three types of correlations calculated. Where both variables are continuous, the *Pearson product-moment correlation* is calculated. If both variables are ordinal, the *polychoric correlation* is calculated. Finally, if one variable is ordinal and the other is continuous, a *polyserial correlation* is calculated (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986). Using weighted least squares (WLS), PRELIS prepared a correlation matrix for the model to be estimated with each type of correlation estimated separately.

The correlations for both ordinal and continuous observed variables are found in Table 4a. There are three pairs of observed variables, with their correlations, which were used to estimate the three-factors Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement. Expected Education correlated strongly with Expected Occupation; Self-concept (School) correlated strongly with Self-concept (General); and Maths achievement correlated strongly with Science achievement. There was evidence that these variables formed three latent traits which were also correlated with one another.

In Table 4b the parameter estimates (lambda x's), errors (theta delta's) and reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) are shown, along with goodness of fit measures for the combination of the three factors. This three-factor congeneric model had a good fit with a small Chi-square = 2.10 and large p = 0.91. The goodness of fit index of 1.00 indicates that this model was reliable. In this analysis, the three latent variables were standardized so that λ_x are regression coefficients. The lambda x's were strong with good reliabilities, however Expected Occupation had a weak lambda x and reliability.

Finally, the covariance between the three latent traits were estimated (see ϕ's in Table 4b). Of the three phi's, only the covariance between Self-concept and Achievement was significant.

A Two-Factor Congeneric Measurement Model: Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment

As noted before, two sets of measurement models were estimated to ensure that they fitted well before combining them into a single measurement model. In the second analysis, eight observed variables were used to estimate two more latent traits. Socioeconomic Status was a latent trait estimated by three ordinal indicator variables, *Father'sEducation* (Fed), *Mother'sOccupation* (Mocc) and *Father's Occupation* (Focc). Classroom Learning Environment was estimated by the five continuous composite variables: *Student Cohesiveness, Teacher Support, Involvement, Task Orientation* and *Cooperation*.

The measured (observed) variables making the two latent traits are:

x_1 = Father's Education
x_2 = Mother's Occupation
x_3 = Father's Occupation
x_4 = Student Cohesiveness
x_5 = Teacher Support
x_6 = Involvement
x_7 = Task Orientation
x_8 = Cooperation

The path diagram for this two-factor measurement model is given in Figure 2.

The correlations for both ordinal and continuous observed variables are found in Table 5a. There were two sets of observed variables, with their correlations, which were used to estimate the two-factors Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment. Father's Education correlated weakly with Mother's Occupation and with Father's Occupation. Correlations among the five variables Cohesiveness, Teacher Supportiveness, Involvement, Task Orientation and Cooperation were strong. There was evidence that these variables formed two latent traits which did not correlate with one another.

In Table 5b the parameter estimates (lambda x's), errors (theta delta's) and reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) are shown, along with goodness of fit measures for the combination of the two factors. This two-factor congeneric model had a reasonable fit with a small Chi-square = 32.02 and reasonable p = 0.031. The goodness of fit index of 0.99 indicated that this model was a good fit. In this analysis, the two latent variables were standardized so that λ_x are regression coefficients. The lambda x's were strong with good reliabilities, however Mother's Occupation had a weak lambda x and poor reliability. This probably contributed to the larger chi-square and p.

Finally, the covariance between the two latent traits were estimated and found to be strong and not significant (see ϕ in Table 5b). The standard error of this phi was too large and therefore the phi was likely to be a random effect. That is, there was no covariance between Socioeconomic Status and the Classroom Learning Environment.

Table 4a. Correlation matrix for the three-factor congeneric measurement model.

Observed Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ambition						
1. Expected Education	1.00					
2. Expected Occupation	.38	1.00				
Self-Concept						
3. Self-concept (School)	.43	.26	1.00			
4. Self-concept (General)	.35	.21	.72	1.00		
Achievement						
5. Mathematics	.33	.22	.36	.27	1.00	
6. Science	.29	.17	.30	.24	.63	1.00

Table 4b. Three-factor congeneric measurement model parameter estimates lambda-x (regression coefficients), theta deltas (error variance of measurement), item reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) and goodness-of-fit measures: Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement.

Observed Variables	*Lambda x* λ_{x_i}	*Theta Delta* θ_i	*Squared Multiple Correlation (Reliability)* $\rho\xi_i$
Ambition			
1. Expected Education λ_{11}	.95	.10	.90
2. Expected Occupation λ_{21}	.54	.70	.30
Self-Concept			
3. Self-concept (School) λ_{32}	.97	.06	.94
4. Self-concept (General) λ_{42}	.75	.44	.56
Achievement			
5. Mathematics λ_{53}	.87	.25	.75
6. Science λ_{63}	.73	.46	.54
Ambition/Self-concept ϕ_{21}	.45 (ns)		
Ambition/Achievement ϕ_{31}	.43 (ns)		
Self-concept/Achievement ϕ_{32}	.37 (sig)	t=17.93	
Goodness of fit measures:			
Chi-square (χ^2)		2.10	
Degrees of freedom (df)		6	
Probability (p)		0.91	
Goodness of fit index (GFI)		1.00	
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)		1.00	
Root mean square residual (RMR)		0.035	

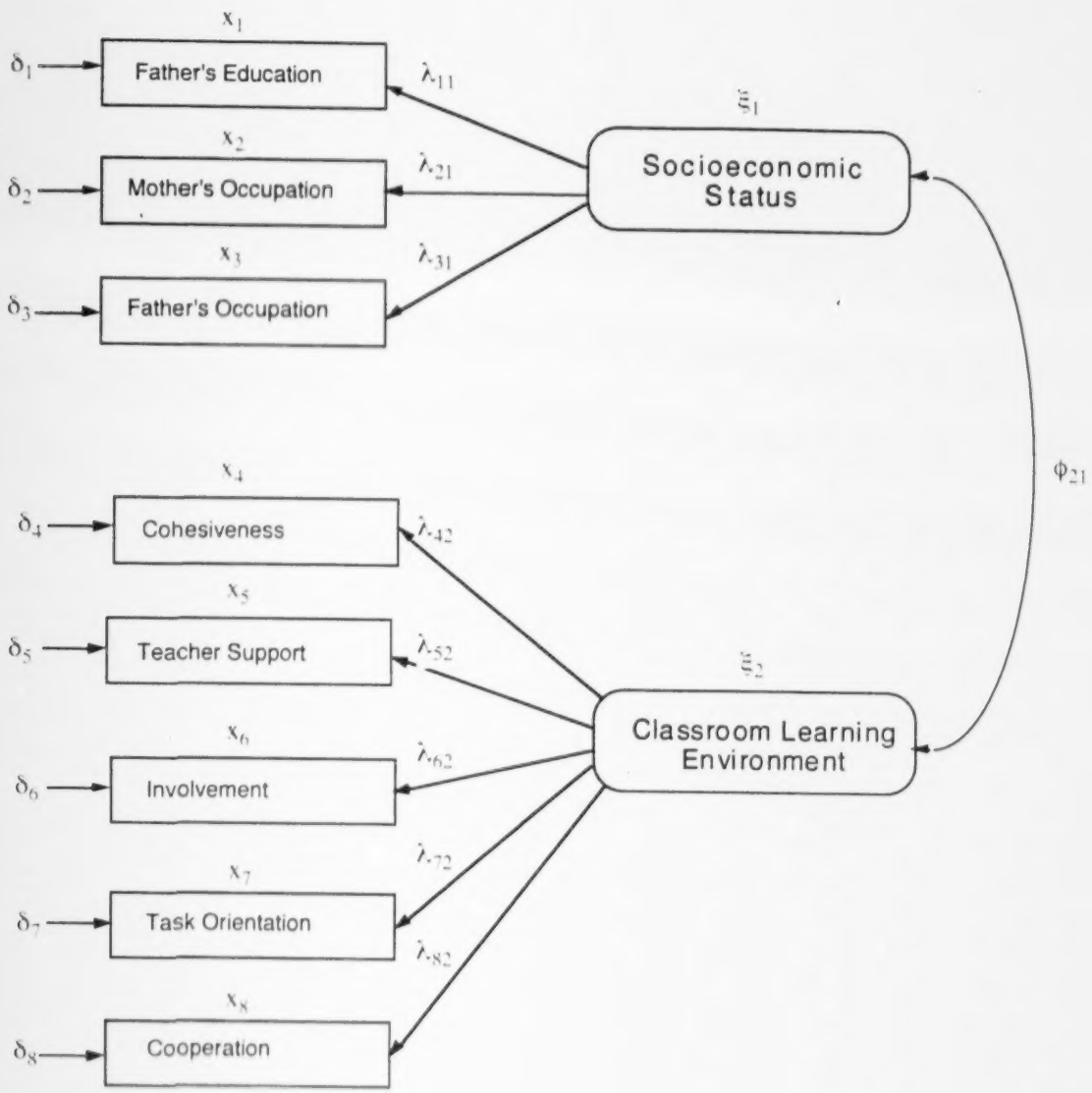

Figure 2. The Two-Factor Measurement Model for Socioeconomic Status and the Classroom Learning Environment

Table 5a. Correlation matrix for the two-factor congeneric measurement model Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment.

Observed Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Socioeconomic Status								
1. Father's Education	1.00							
2. Mother's Occupation	.10	1.00						
3. Father's Occupation	.20	.21	1.00					
Classroom Learning Environment								
4. Cohesiveness	.09	.08	.08	1.00				
5. Teacher Supportiveness	.10	.05	.08	.44	1.00			
6. Involvement	.10	.05	.06	.57	.62	1.00		
7. Task Orientation	.08	.01	.05	.43	.57	.54	1.00	
8. Cooperation	.09	.05	.05	.62	.50	.62	.57	1.00

Table 5b. Two-factor congeneric measurement model parameter lambda-x (regression coefficients), theta deltas (error variance of measurement), item reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) and goodness-of-fit measures: Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment.

Observed Variables	*Lambda x* λ_x	*Theta Delta* θ_δ	*Squared Multiple Correlation (Reliability)* $\rho\xi_i$
Socioeconomic Status			
1. Father's Education λ_{11}	.41	.83	.17
2. Mother's Occupation λ_{21}	.20	.96	.04
3. Father's Occupation λ_{31}	.36	.87	.13
Classroom Learning Environment			
4. Cohesiveness λ_{42}	.73	.46	.54
5. Teacher Supportiveness λ_{52}	.76	.43	.57
6. Involvement λ_{62}	.83	.32	.68
7. Task Orientation λ_{72}	.75	.44	.56
8. Cooperation λ_{82}	.84	.29	.71
SES/CLE ϕ_{12}	.40 (ns)		
Goodness of fit measures:			
Chi-square (χ^2)		32.02	
Degrees of freedom (df)		19	
Probability (p)		0.031	
Goodness of fit index (GFI)		0.99	
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)		0.98	
Root mean square residual (RMR)		0.055	

A Five-Factor Measurement Model: Ambition, Self-Concept, Achievement, Socioeconomic Status, Classroom Learning Environment

Before estimating the complete structural equation model, the previously estimated five latent traits were reestimated simultaneously and, while the chi-square was larger it was of reasonable size for the 106 degrees of freedom (148.33). The goodness of fit index was acceptable (GFI=0.95). When combined, there were three endogenous latent traits (*Ambition, Self-Concept and Achievement*) and two exogenous latent traits (*Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment*). Endogenous latent traits are denoted by an eta η and are like the dependent variables in ordinary regression. Exogenous latent traits predict exogenous latent traits (like independent variables in ordinary regression) and are denoted by an epsilon ξ.

In Table 6 the endogenous parameter estimates (lambda x's), errors (theta delta's), reliabilities (squared multiple correlations), the exogenous parameter estimates (lambda y's), errors (theta epsilon's) and reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) are shown, along with goodness of fit measures for the combination of the two factors. In this analysis, the five latent variables were standardized so that the lambdas were regression coefficients.

Table 6. Five-factor congeneric measurement model parameter lambda-x (regression coefficients), theta deltas (error variance of measurement), item reliabilities (squared multiple correlations) and goodness-of-fit measures: Socioeconomic Status and Classroom Learning Environment.

Observed Variables (Endogenous)	*Lambda y* λ_{y_i}	*Squared Multiple Correlation (Reliability)* $\rho\eta_i$	*Observed Variables (Exogenous)*	*Lambda x* λ_{x_i}	*Squared Multiple Correlation (Reliability)* $\rho\xi_i$
Ambition			*Socioeconomic Status*		
1. Expected Education	.99	1.00	1. Father's Education	.97	1.00
2. Expected Occupation	1.04	1.00	2. Mother's Occupation	.99	1.00
Self-Concept			3. Father's Occupation	1.02	1.00
3. Self-concept (School)	.89	.81	*Classroom Learning Environment*		
4. Self-concept (General)	.92	1.00	4. Cohesiveness	.88	1.00
Achievement			5. Teacher Supportiveness	.87	1.00
5. Mathematics	.74	.60	6. Involvement	.90	1.00
6. Science	.91	1.00	7. Task Orientation	.86	1.00
			8. Cooperation	.91	1.00

Goodness of fit measures:

Chi-square (χ^2)	148.33
Degrees of freedom (df)	106
Probability (p)	0.0042
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.95
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.93
Root mean square residual (RMR)	0.30

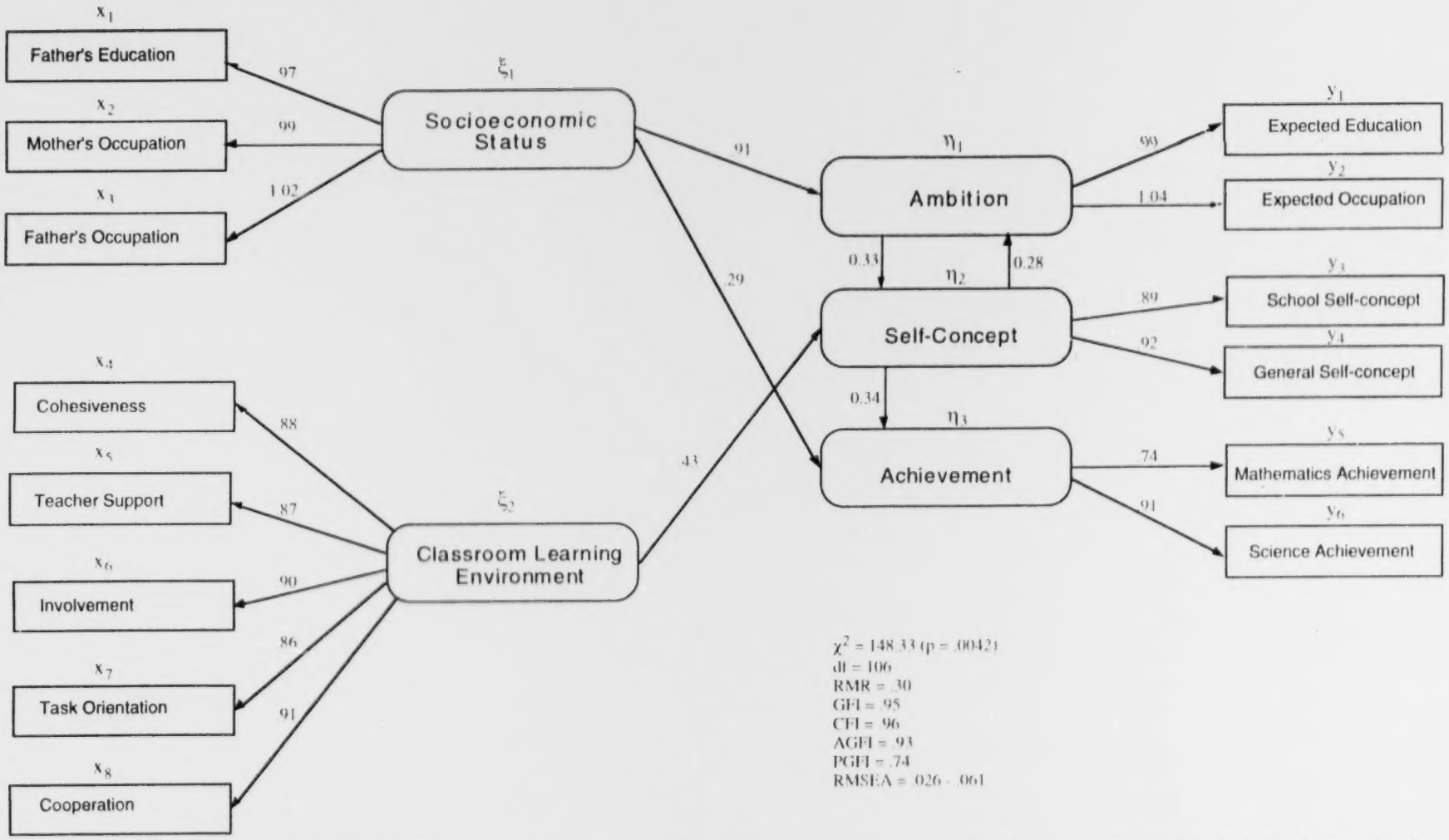

Figure 3. A Structural Equation Model of Ambition, Self-concept, Achievement, Classroom Learning Environment, Socioeconomic Status for Rural and Urban Schools

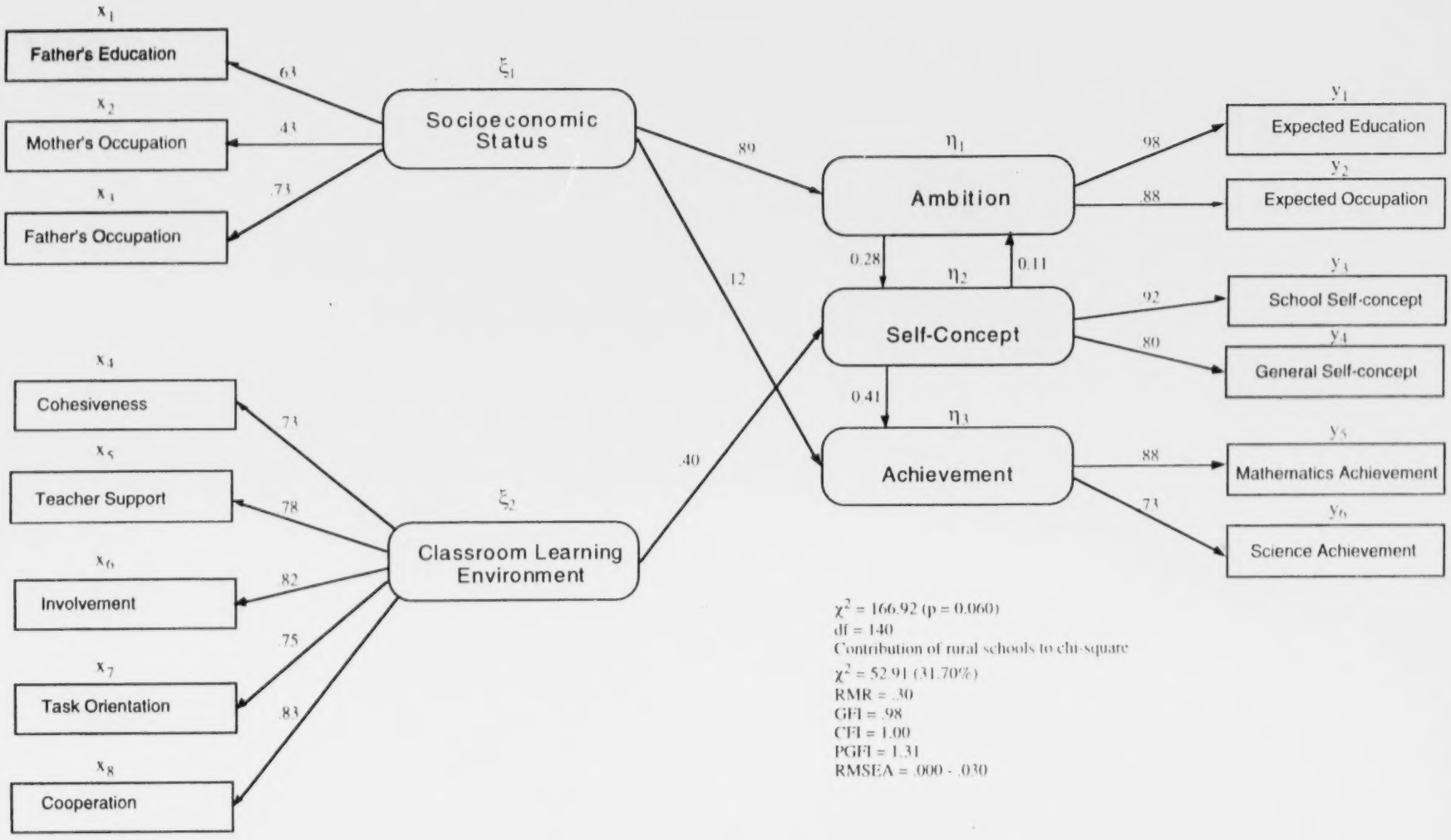

Figure 4. A Structural Equation Model of Ambition, Self-concept, Achievement, Classroom Learning Environment, Socioeconomic Status for Rural Schools

How did these relationships vary between rural and urban schools?

This structural equation model was estimated in identical manner to rural school students (Figure 4) and urban school students (Figure 5). The model fit rural students better, with a smaller contribution to the chi-square (31.70%). Of particular difference was the effect of Self-Concept on Ambition. In general, the model had a strong effect from SES to Ambition to Self-Concept and then to Achievement. However, there was a weak effect back from Self-Concept onto Ambition with rural students. This effect was negligible for urban students. Students from rural schools appeared to be more influenced by their self-concept, when compared with students from urban schools.

Summary of Research Findings

What is the effect of the Classroom Learning Environment on student aspirations and achievement?

The Classroom Learning Environment had a strong, positive effect upon students' Self-Concept and this in turn had an indirect effect upon students' Ambition and Aspirations. So while the effect of the classroom was observed, it was only through Self-Concept that it was able to act.

What is the effect of Socioeconomic Status on student aspirations and achievement?

Socioeconomic Status had a strong, positive effect upon students' Ambitions and Aspirations, but not directly on Self-Concept. The effect on Ambition was very strong. The effect on Achievement was weak, but positive. Overall, Socioeconomic Status had an overwhelming impact upon these student outcomes.

What is the effect of Self-Esteem/Self-Concept on student aspirations and achievement?

Student Self-Concept had a direct effect upon both students' Ambition and Aspirations and Achievement. This effect was mitigated by Socioeconomic Status, yet still strong.

Does a model which explains the relationship between student aspirations, achievement, self-esteem, socioeconomic status and the classroom learning environment, differ for rural and urban students?

When two structural equation models were compared for rural and urban students, there was a small difference in the structures. For students attending urban schools, there appeared to be little or no relationship between self-esteem and ambition. For rural students, there was a small effect of self-esteem on ambition and a larger effect of ambition on self-esteem. The effects were reciprocal for rural students. Otherwise, the structural equation models were similar with the model fitting rural students better than urban students.

Discussion

In the examination of Quaglia and Cobb's (1996) theory of aspirations in this research, a number of internal and external influences on the student which appear to affect the student's level of aspirations were investigated. These included the student's socioeconomic status, the classroom learning environment and the student's own self-concept. Here we have demonstrated the relationships that these variables have on the student's career choice and education choice – called ambition or aspirations in this discussion. These relationships were positive and worked mainly through the student's self-concept; either as a mitigating variable or a direct conduit of the student's self-esteem.

So what are the implications for research? It is certainly difficult to collect large-scale data. This paper shows that the data is representative of high and low socioeconomic areas in Western Australia, as well as rural, remote and urban locations. With so many students providing a rich source of data, it has become difficult to write up all of the research into publishable papers. However, now that this paper has demonstrated the importance of self-concept in motivating students' aspirations, particularly in rural locations, it is useful to now consider what are the characteristics of schools which have high levels of student self-concept. Further, does the teacher's own self-concept make a difference?

In further research, the importance of aspirations in determining life choices of students must be considered in the context of the school environment. The conclusion reached by Quaglia and Cobb that "educators and researchers need to examine and measure key school conditions that affect student aspirations" should become a fundamental part of any school effectiveness research.

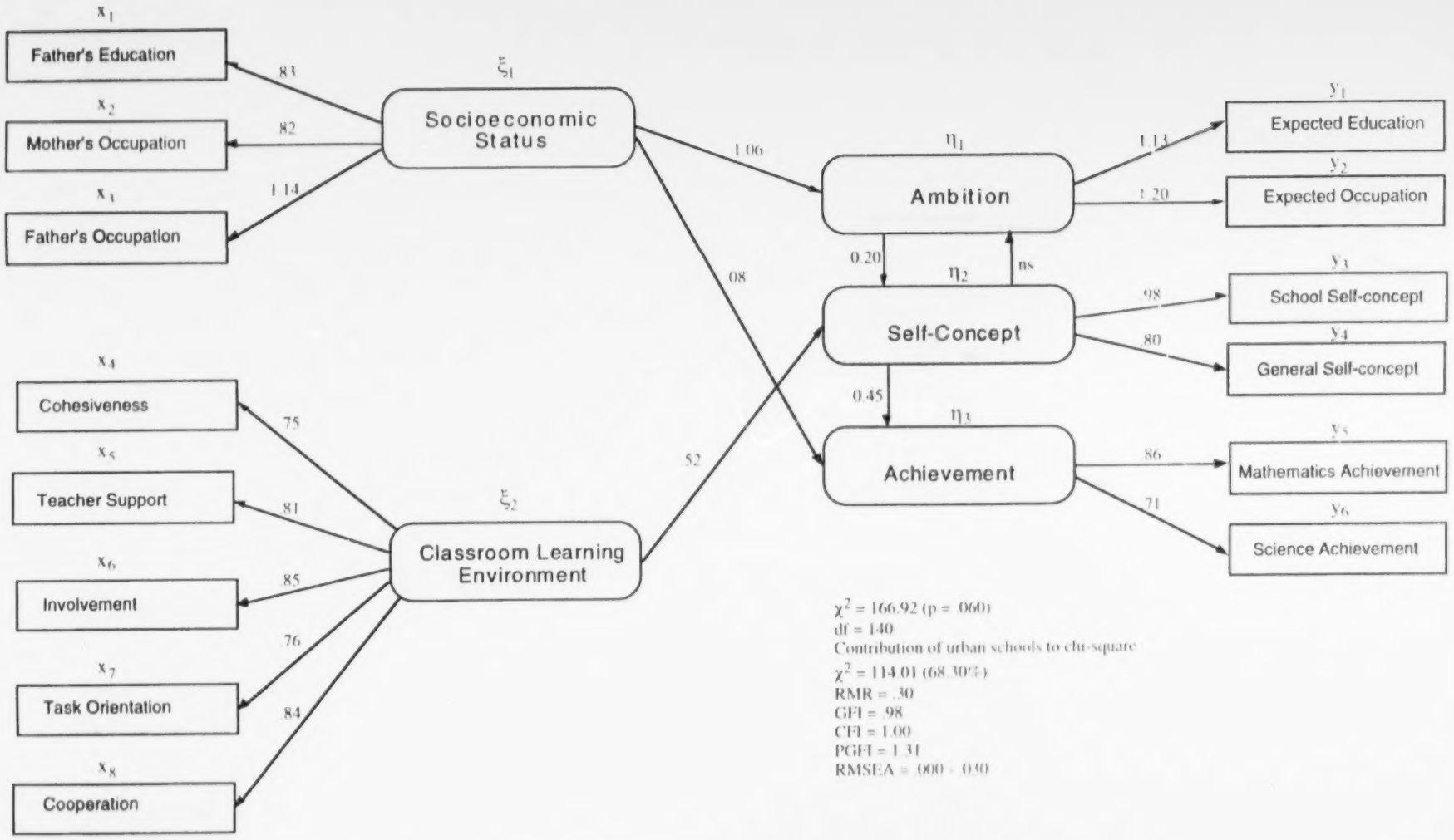

Figure 5. A Structural Equation Model of Ambition, Self-concept, Achievement, Classroom Learning Environment, Socioeconomic Status for Urban Schools

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Appendix I

Latent Trait Variables	Observed Indicator Variables	Coding
Ambition	Occupational Aspirations	1 – 10
	Educational Aspirations	1 – 6
Self-Concept	General Self-Concept	1 – 5
	School Self-Concept	1 – 5
Achievement	Mathematics Achievement	-3 – +4
	Science Achievement	-3 – +4
Socioeconomic Status	Father's Occupation	1 – 10
	Mother's Occupation	1 – 10
	Father's Education	1 – 6
	Mother's Education	1 – 6
Classroom Learning Environment	Student Cohesiveness	1 – 5
	Teacher Support	1 – 5
	Involvement	1 – 5
	Task Orientation	1 – 5
	Cooperation	1 – 5
Rural	Rural	Rural = 2, Urban = 1

Results of the Structural Equation Models

A Structural Equation Model for all Schools

How well did the model fit?

The complete structural equation model (SEM) for all schools (rural and urban) is shown in Figure 3, with separate analyses for Rural and Urban schools in Figures 4 and 5 respectively. While the variable Rural was included in this model initially, it did not appear to have any significant effect upon the eta latent traits - Ambition, Self-concept and Achievement. However, the effect of other variables such as Socioeconomic Status and the Classroom Learning Environment were strong and significant on the eta's. Further, the model seemed similar whether the school was rural or urban, at least for this specific model of self-esteem.

The intercorrelations have already been shown in Tables 4a and 5a for the measured variables, with the results of this first SEM shown in Figure 3. These results have standardized coefficients on each arrow from one variable to another, the unstandardized coefficients, standard errors and squared multiple correlations for these SEM's may be obtained from the author by request. The bottom middle section of the figure shows the fit indices used to evaluate the adequacy of this model. With a χ^2 of 148.33 and p= 0042, the probability that this model fits the population is not good. That is, models with a $p > .05$ are more likely to fit the population. This model still did not appear to fit the data well, however χ^2 is a poor measure of fit when the sample is large due to its calculation of $N - 1$ times the minimum value of the fit function.

Further measures of fit were examined including the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI = .95) measuring the relative amount of variances and covariances accounted for by the model (Tanaka & Huba, 1984, 1985), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .96) comparing the model with a null model which assumes that the variables are uncorrelated. As the GFI and CFI approach 1.00, the fit improves. This model appeared to fit well enough with the GFI and CFI both greater than .90. The Goodness of Fit index adjusted for degrees of freedom (AGFI = .93) was also an indicator that the model fit well. These Goodness of Fit measures do not depend on sample size and measure how much better the model fits as compared with no model at all. The Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI = .74) is an adjusted Goodness of Fit measure for degrees of freedom (similar to AGFI) (Mulaik, et al., 1989).

The Root Mean-square Residual (RMR = .30) should be near zero for a "good" model and measures the model's capacity to predict covariance. The departure of the predicted covariance from the true covariance is a misspecified model. In this case, there is reason to doubt that the model is predicting the covariances or variances of the variables (Bollen, 1989, p. 257-258).

The final fit index is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (ε) 90% confidence interval (RMSEA = .026 to .061). This provides a measure of discrepancy per degree of freedom with RMSEAs of .08 representing reasonable errors of approximation in the population (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

All of these fit statistics indicate that this model did fit the data well, with the result that the lambdas, gammas and betas were estimated and were considered reasonable representation of the model.

What were the relationships between Self-concept, Self-esteem and the other variables of interest?

There appeared to be a causal relationship with Ambition driving Self-Concept and Self-Concept driving Achievement (see Figure 3). That is, students with greater career and educational aspirations seemed to have higher Self-Concept and Achievement. Self-Concept was also causing higher aspirations/ambition. These relationships were modified by the student's socioeconomic status, with a strong effect on Ambition and a weaker effect on Achievement. Further, the Classroom Learning Environment had a strong and significant effect upon Self-Concept.

These findings confirmed previous research from the pilot study, that student Self-Concept, or Self-Esteem, was not only influenced by the student's own aspirations and socioeconomic background, but also by the classroom learning environment. That is, there was direct evidence that the school could influence the student's self-esteem and in turn the student's achievement and ambitions.

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Rural and Remote Professional Practice Placements for Children's Studies Students.

by
Stephanie Jackiewicz, Rosa Lincoln and Kristen Brockman

Edith Cowan University.
Faculty of Health and Human Science.
School of Community Studies.
Children's Studies.
Joondalup Campus. W.A.

Abstract

Research has shown that rural communities are often lacking in services and personnel who are suitably prepared to operate them. Provision of services such as schools, child care and other children's services in rural areas, requires an understanding of the needs of these communities. This paper looks at how one course has attempted to alleviate this lack of suitability and understanding, by the inclusion of a rural and remote practice. The course prepares graduates to work in a variety of children's services, including those in both metropolitan and rural and remote areas. The paper specifically looks at the four key stake holders involved in this experience, the students, staff, university and the local communities. Some of the experiences encountered will be shared in the paper, however, the true value of such an event can only be gained by experiencing it for oneself. The insight gained by these four groups has been invaluable and a close bond has formed between all who participated in this experience.

Across Australia there are many courses preparing graduates to work with children in various capacities, child care workers, teachers, play leaders and other positions too numerous to mention. Many of these courses recognise the importance of practical experience and have incorporated practical components within their courses. However, many of these practices are located in the city giving new graduates little practice in the specific needs faced by children and families in rural communities. In an attempt to address this situation one of these courses, currently operating in Western Australia, decided to incorporate a Rural and Remote Practice into its program. Each year this practice is offered in a different setting, depending upon the needs of the rural community. It would appear that there are four key stake holders in this practical arrangement, the students, the staff, the university and the community. All seem to gain a great deal from their involvement in such a practical experience. This paper will describe the type of experiences offered and look at the gains made by each of these stake holder groups. Unfortunately it is not possible to capture on

paper all the golden moments that were had during these experiences and therefore a video and pictorial presentation accompanied the paper at the conference

Professional Practice allows students the opportunity to explore potential careers, make the connection between theory and practise, meet licensing requirements, and prepare students for their role in the field (Ganser, 1996). Many graduates will be employed in the city and never work in the country, others will be posted to the country or choose to transfer to the country. Higgins (1992) stated that teachers placed in rural situations "had little formal preparation"(p.1) for such settings. These graduates often have had no experience in the rural settings on which to base their career decisions. Boylan and Bandy (1994) stated that prospective rural employers should look for graduates with experience in rural settings. Many aspects of theory can be put into practice in the usual metropolitan placement, however, the rural setting offers new challenges to implementation of theory. A rural and remote practice goes a long way to helping students consolidate theory. It is possible for licensing requirements to be met in a variety of practical settings either in metropolitan or rural areas. Courses that prepare teachers should include a focus on preparing students for rural experiences (Higgins, 1992, Boylan and Bandy, 1994). Children's Services such as schools" often serve as a cultural centre in the community" (Miller, 1995, p.1) and graduates need to be prepared for this role.

These experiences have been immeasurable in terms of preparing students for the field and providing opportunities to put theory into practice, this connection is an important component of effective university teaching (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1993). Although it is possible in metropolitan practicals to put theory into practice, the colourful experience gained on these placements could not possibly be gained in any metropolitan setting. It is important to vary the context in which practical components of the course are offered, in an attempt to meet the varied needs of the students and develop a model of good teaching practice (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1993). This rural and remote program has certainly provided students with variation.

This Rural and Remote Practical program has been operating for 3 years.
It has been integrated into the practicum curriculum for Children's Studies as part of the commitment to integrate field work and to enhance student learning (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1993). The first of the Rural and Remote practises occurred at Sandstone, a town in Western Australia located 661km North East of Perth. Sandstone was set to celebrate their Centenary and many activities were planned for the weekend. Families were returning to Sandstone from many parts of Australia to enjoy the celebrations. Children's Studies became involved in offering this service by way of practical experience for the

students. Due to the huge success of the Sandstone experience the University were invited to repeat the experience the following year at the Wiluna Centenary Celebrations. Wiluna is located some 950 km North East of Perth, Western Australia. The town has a large indigenous population yet the official population is approx 200. There were many people returning to the town which was once a thriving mining town site with a population of approx 10,000. Much was planned for this celebration and it was decided to offer care for the children over the weekend, thus allowing parents to attend various functions. The Wiluna experience had been on a much grander scale that that at Sandstone and led to the next Rural and Remote Practice in Geraldton. On this third occasion the brief was to provide care for the siblings, of the children from Meekathara School of the Air. The parents were in Geraldton to receive training in home tutoring with their school aged children and needed specialised care for their younger children. Geraldton is port town located 424 km from Perth and hosts a large population of over 21,000. The children attending the service were from outlying stations and had little opportunity to come to a town such as Geraldton. Many had not been left in anyone's care ever before. As can be seen, the brief of each placement was very different and each one held its own set of challenges.

The Children Studies course takes an ecological approach to children and their families and these placements were an ideal opportunity to put this approach into practice. The ecological approach sees children developing not in isolation, but as part of a larger system. There are many influences upon children and each of these needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is perhaps even more evident in a rural or remote locality where the impact of larger systems on individuals can often be more obvious because of the small community.

The students were dealing with a variety of children and families, often they were confronted with health issues, such as substance abuse, that had to be dealt with immediately. Decisions had to be made quickly and acted upon. This is unlike a metropolitan practice where there is always someone to refer the decision making too. Students in conjunction with lecturers were able to make sound decisions based on the context and using the ecological approach. Sometimes, given the setting, it was appropriate to make decisions that may not have been acceptable in the metropolitan area for example in the early hours of the morning sleeping children where piled into the back seats of cars, during the day children were sometimes fed food which was not of adequate nutritional value. The theory had been learnt prior to coming on placement and now was the chance to put it into practice. This was a very empowering process for the students as they made the decision, acted upon it and were able to see the short term outcomes of their decision.

Something else students rarely gain experience in, is working with people from the Aboriginal culture. During the Wiluna experience students worked with many children from a fairly traditional Aboriginal culture, an experience they may otherwise never have had. Students were amazed to experience first hand the difference in the Aboriginal children's play compared to white Australian children. Their play was more spontaneous and free in their exploration of the environment. This fits well with the child initiated approach to play which is taught within the course. The role of the adult is that of facilitator assisting the children as required. Students were able to see the benefits of this approach as the children naturally interacted with the environment carefully set up by the students and teaching staff. The students were called on to facilitate the children's play as the need arose.

Another group of children and families the students were exposed to were the children from outlying stations. These children had had little contact with other children or adults and for them this was an alien situation. Students had to plan carefully how they could integrate these children while causing them the minimum of stress, in a short period of time. The very young children from Meekatharra School of the Air came with their own unique set of needs. They needed to be cared for by strangers in the same way they would be at home. Students had to quickly adopt the primary caregiver system whereby one caregiver is assigned to a small number of children. They are then responsible for all the needs of these children for the remainder of their time in care. This system helps develop attachments between carers and young children. It is essential to develop secondary attachments in order for the children to feel safe and secure (Gonzalez - Mena & WidmeyerEyer, 1993, p.75, Hutchins, 1995, p. 46). However, the challenge was to meet the varied needs of these children. Some slept with toys or bottles, others did not sleep. Some went down early, others late. Some ate meals, others grazed throughout the day. Some were cuddled to sleep, others went into cots with or without comforters. Many of the children were used to the outdoors and not keen on playing inside. Students had to adjust to this rapidly in order to meet the needs of these children. In the case of outdoor play this involved moving the entire indoor environment outdoors, a practice that rarely occurs in the metropolitan area.

Yet another challenge face by the students was to provide care with limited resources. In many settings in the metropolitan area there is an abundance of resources. In these rural and remote localities we were limited in what we could take with us, as space was at a premium on the bus or in the cars. Prior to arriving at places there was no telling what resources were available. Often we would arrive and promised resources were unavailable. This meant students had to improvise, an invaluable skill to acquire, for example cubbies were built from staff's sleeping bags to give children a quiet place to be away from the others.

something that was important for children who were not used to being around large numbers of strangers. Another improvisation was Boot Scooting in the red dirt of Wiluna, a far cry from the polished floors of the city. When using premises which belong to others it is important to take good care of the premises and equipment and to respect others and their equipment. This is a useful skill for anyone entering the Children's Services field as sharing space is often necessary.

In addition to the benefits gained by the students, the staff accompanying the students on the program were also to benefit. The Australian Vice- Chancellors' Committee (1993) states that "students expect and value their university teacher's competence in the subject areas they teach..." p.2. A criticism often made of academics is that they become locked away in ivory towers and forget what happens at the grass roots level. That the theory taught is just that, theory, and not possible to be implemented in the real world. This program gives academics a chance to put the theory into practice and identify the problems first hand, that practitioners face. It also builds credibility with students to see their lecturers in action and to see that the theory can be put into practice. Never again do you hear in a lecture "that is fine in theory but it can't work in the real world". It also offers an opportunity for staff to liaise with the wider community, promoting the University to a wider audience, one that is often neglected, the rural sector. Exposure to rural communities allows academics to identify the needs of such communities which enriches the teaching process when explaining theory to students and offers an opportunity to identify areas for research. This fits with the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (1993) belief that "university teachers need to contribute to their disciplines ... and integrate into their teaching the knowledge and understanding which they or others create" (p 2). Staff development was enhanced from these Rural and Remote Practices and so was the Universities profile.

The University has enhanced their image in Rural West Australia through this program. There is a level of commitment within the University to

- " encourage students to participate in appropriate community activities
- establish strong links with ... communities
- be pro active in seeking to serve the needs of the community
- encourage the community to use the resources of the faculty
- increase staff participation in community service activities
- increase the level of participation by community organisers in the activities of the faculty and
- to be responsive to the community" (Vision 2002, 1997, p. 85 - 97)

These families and many other members of these communities are now aware of some of the role the university plays, particularly in relation to the community. This is a role that is not often common knowledge and most certainly not to those who are physically isolated in remote localities. Whilst out in these communities the University has established strong links with individuals and services in the rural and remote communities. The Universities profile has been lifted substantially by this program. The rich experience the staff and students have gained during this placement has also been of benefit to the University. This experience can only enhance teaching practice and student understanding of theory. As much as the University, staff and students have gained from this program so to have the rural communities involved. This has been evident by the letters of thanks that have been received and the tears of joy at the end of each experience.

The community also gains from access to such a service. In rural Australia access and equity to Human Services are both issues for families. This is particularly an issue for "farm women [who] are ... amongst the most isolated ... in the country, physically, socially and in relation to learning opportunities" (Phillips and Richardson, 1992, p.1). Usually access and equity focus on the constraints of availability and geography(O'Tool, 1993) In this case the University made available a service in a suitable locality which is part of the universities commitment to involve the community in their activities (Vision 2002, 1997, p.86 - 87). The service provided families with opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach, for example, attendance at School of the Air tutorials and centenary celebrations. Many families had not been exposed to such a service and their understanding of these services was limited. Having now experienced one, their understanding of the role these services play is greatly changed, for the better. As many of these families are isolated they have limited opportunity to discuss child rearing methods and practices, this service gave them a forum that recognised there need to do this and which was willing to participate in their discussions. It also exposed them to alternate child rearing methods and ideas. The children had the opportunity to meet and play with their peers in a safe and welcoming environment that met their individual needs. An opportunity rarely afforded these children.

As can be seen there are several stake holders in this process and many winners. The students have been given the opportunity to put theory into practice and further their preparation for work in the field. The staff have enhanced their credibility with students and identified new research areas. The university have enhanced their image in rural and remote West Australia as well as gaining from staff and students enhanced experiences. Finally the rural and remote communities have gained through increased access to services and increased understanding of the role of children's services and universities. I wish everyone could

experience at least one of these practicals because the experience is such a rich one and impossible to adequately describe on paper.

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First Year University in Retrospect: The Voices of Rural Students

by

Brian Hemmings, Doug Hill, and David Ray
Charles Sturt University (Riverina)

ABSTRACT

This study provides a personal, retrospective account of the perceived successes and failures encountered by a sample of rural students during their first year of tertiary study. Collected via an interview format, their comments point to a clear set of challenges, strategies, and suggestions that may prove valuable to other rural students considering attending university as well as to those professionals charged with providing them with counselling and guidance.

Introduction

The study reported here is concerned with university student success and satisfaction during the first year of tertiary education for rural-based school leavers. This is the first time a study of this type has been undertaken in Australia. Earlier work has not addressed the specific needs and characteristics of rural students but has concentrated on large aggregated samples. The present study is a continuation of previous research which began with a cohort of Year 10 students (N=840) and followed them through to the end of Year 12 (N=340). This earlier research focused on the factors which influence whether or not students stay on at school, concluding that family background, goal and school commitment, academic and social integration, and needs accommodation affected this decision (see e.g., Hemmings & Hill, 1995; Hemmings, Jin, & Low, 1996).

In order to collect data about the university experiences of rural students, a sample of 15 students was interviewed. These students were drawn from a group of 125 Riverina-based students who participated in the original research project and progressed to university in the period 1994-1996. This time-frame was used in order to accommodate students who moved directly from high school to university, and those who deferred enrolment either for one or two years. Those students who were interviewed attended a number of universities including Charles Sturt University, the University of Melbourne, the University of New England, and the University of Wollongong.

Method

A stratified random sample of 15 students was obtained using the following criteria:

(a) approximately equal numbers of males and females,

(b) about equal proportion of students residing on campus and off campus, and,

(c) a representative mix of universities.

The schedule used in the 30 minute interviews was based on earlier work of McGinnis, James, and McNaught (1995) and Hemmings, Boylan, Hill, and Kay (1996) and followed the procedural guidelines suggested by Cocklin (1989). The interviewer was free to pursue particular lines of interest within the schedule as a means of developing a coherent account of an individual student's first year university experience. In most cases the reporting was retrospective. Field notes for each interview were recorded and a detailed report on each interviewee was prepared shortly afterwards by the interviewer. These reports were subjected to a content analysis (see e.g., Ellis, 1994; Hemmings & Boylan, 1992) and the results are summarised, in most instances, using a tabular form.

Results

For convenience the results are reported in terms of the key questions from the interview schedule.

Question 1: ***How far have you progressed in your course?***

Table 1

Category (All references to graduation and year completion refer to the university year ending 12/96)	**Number of Comments**
Have graduated from a 3 year degree	4
Have completed 3 years of a 4 year degree	3
Left university after 1 year	1
Part-time student entering their last year	1
Have completed 2 years of a 3 year degree, having deferred the first year	1
Have to make up a few subjects in 1997 to graduate	1
Have completed 3 years of a 5 year programme	2
Have completed 2 years of a 4 year programme, having previously studied 1 year at TAFE	1
Have completed 1 year of university, having previously studied 2 years at TAFE	1

Question 2: ***Was this university your first choice?***

60% (N=9) of the interviewees indicated that the university they attended was their university of first choice. Consequently 40% (N=6) of the students enrolled at a university which was not their first preference.

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Question 3: ***What course are you now studying?***

Table 2

Course of Study	Number of Students
Primary Teaching	3
Psychology	1
Commerce	1
Tourism	1
Science	1
Physical Education Teaching	1
Technical Theatre	1
Environmental Science	1
Arts/Law	1
Business	1
Applied Science	1
Surveying	1
Veterinary Science	1

Question 4: ***Was this course your first preference?***

The vast majority of students (86.66%, N=13) stated that the course they studied was their first choice.

Question 5: ***What made you choose this university in the first place?***

Table 3

Specific Point	Number of Comments
Availability of course	10
Proximity	9
Reputation	6
Family/friends/ lived in university locale	5
Experience of friends/relatives	4
Positive prior experience in university setting	4
Cost	2
University in student's home location	2
Facilities	2
Friends attending same university	2
Attractive campus	2
Special admission offer	2
Accepted by the university	2
Other (single comments)	4

Question 6: ***Why did you choose that course of study in the first place?***

Table 4

Category	Number of Comments
Interest/aptitude	14
Experience	5
Advice from others	2

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Question 7: ***Overall, did you find the transition from school to university easy or difficult?***

Table 5

Category	Number of Comments
Easy	9
Difficult	5
Unsure	1

Question 8: ***What challenges did you face in your first year that made the transition from school to university difficult?***

Table 6

Specific Point	Number of Comments
Making friends and 'fitting in' socially	9
Living off campus	4
Decreased degree of direction from others	4
Independent living	4
Missed family and friends back home	3
Difficulty adapting to large campus	3
Conflict with room-mates	3
Financial worries	3
Heavy workload	2
Difficult course	2
Difficulty adapting to large city	2
Difficulty adapting to large lecture sizes	2
Impersonal relationships with lecturers	2
Boyfriend lived in home location	2
Job in home location	1

Question 9: ***What conditions helped your transition from high school to university?***

Table 7

Specific Point	Number of Comments
Living on campus	6
Making close friends quickly	4
Strongly motivated to do well in university	4
Positive Orientation Week experiences	3
Had been looking forward to attending university for years	3
High school friends attended same university	3
Wanted very much to leave small hometown	3
Family/friends had explained what life at university was like	2
A rural student orientation programme	2
University studies were easier than Year 12	2
Enjoyed living in the city	2
Lived at home while attending home locale university	2
Deferred first year of university to gain work experience	1
Experience at TAFE good preparation for university	1

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Question 10: ***How have you found study at the university compared with school?***

Table 8

Specific Point	Number of Comments	Examples of Comments Made
Decreased degree of direction in university	12	"You're sort of spoon-fed in high school [but in university] you don't get taught. You're there and you learn it rather than being taught something. You're there and if you want to learn it, you can learn it if you like." "You're left to your own devices a lot [and this contributed to] my bit of a downfall first year."
Lower level of difficulty in 1st year university than in Year 12	5	"I had done a lot of work on the HSC and then the first semester [of university] was very similar to high school, so I thought 'this is easy,' and I didn't pick up the pace in the second semester when it got difficult." "I studied a hell of a lot more in high school than I did in university!"
University work much more concentrated than school work	4	"During high school, you learned something over a longer period of time... [but] with university with the beginning of each semester you learned four completely new subjects... you learn it within 13 weeks and then you do an exam and then you sort of forget about it." "At university, it's like we're sitting the HSC every six months."
University class schedule much more flexible than school	4	"You had more freedom and you don't have a set 9 to 3 timetable which was good." "Maybe I work better in regimented conditions... the freedom was really weird to cope with."
Higher level of difficulty in 1st year university than in Year 12	3	"[University was] much harder. At school I could just sort of breeze through and make things up, but I had to apply myself at university."
Impersonal relations with faculty	3	"I felt having no personal contact with lecturers being difficult at first." "[They were] just someone you passed on the campus." "... maybe it's because I'm from such a small school, but having teachers that you'd drop around and have a cup of coffee with and compared to what happens at university was just really different." "You did sense that you should only use them as a last resort."
Increased exposure/interaction with various ethnic groups	3	"It's a real eye-opener, actually, when they talk about where they're from and all that kind of thing." "[I became] a bit more socially aware."
Intimidated by large campuses and large classes	3	"And I can remember going to university for the first day thinking 'I hate this place' [because it] was so huge." "You felt sort of intimidated by actually speaking out and I felt I don't want to say anything because everyone will be looking at me." "It was just a different atmosphere just being completely alien in this big scary campus."

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Question 11: ***How did/do your family view your university experience?***

Table 9

Category	Number of Comments
Very supportive	6
Supportive	8
Somewhat supportive	1
Not supportive	0

Question 12: ***During first year were there times when you felt that you might consider leaving university?***

Seven students responded **yes** to this question, indicating that there were times during the first semester when they really questioned whether or not they had made the correct decision to study at university. These same students were then asked to respond to Questions 13 and 14

Question 13: ***Why did you consider leaving university?***

Table 10

Category	Number of Comments	Examples of Comments Made
Academic	4	"...the pace picks up a bit ... and you start to wonder if this is really what you should be."
Difficulty making friends	2	"I was a bit resentful. I felt isolated from everything... the family are pretty important to me and so are friends, and university friends are only like half-friends, they're not friends you grew up with or anything.... it's a lot different but I got through it."
Missed family and friends	2	"In May, the group of friends we were always with were just so close. We did everything together. There was a group of us that were inseparable and to come away from that was really hard."
Poorly structured/irrelevant course content	2	"My first year in education I felt was a waste of time." "You can't see relevance [between what you are studying and what you think you should be studying] and you just think 'I can't do it'."
Difficulty adapting to the dominant university social culture	1	"I wasn't into the university party-all-night-every-night-scene. I just wasn't into that scene at all. We were just real quiet, come-home-watch-TV kind of people." "I just thought if you don't drink, you don't fit."
Cost	1	"I just find it really hard to go to university and think that you're paying out all this money and you're not getting anything back for four years." [whereas friends are studying and making money as apprentices]
Big city/Big university/culture shock	1	"It was so different from high school. It was just a different atmosphere just being completely alien in this big, scary campus."

Question 14: ***What influenced you to stay on at university?***

Table 11

Specific Point	Number of Comments	Examples of Comments Made
Determination to finish what one starts	4	"I was determined. I had a goal." "I just decided this is what I'm doing. I've already done a year of it and I might as well keep going." "I just didn't want to ever admit that I wanted to quit."
Family pressure/support	3	"I'm glad they [my parents] pushed me. I'm happy that I've persevered and got through it."
Support from friends	2	"[Without my friends with me] I wouldn't have been able to cope. I would have been back in Hay in a flash."
Enjoyed their course	2	"It was coming pretty easy and the marks were good."
Values a university education	2	"I knew more about me and the world"

NB All 15 students answered the remaining two questions.

Question 15: ***What sort of advice would you give about university life to a high school student from a rural background?***

Table 12

Specific Point	Number of Comments	Examples of Comments Made
Be outgoing	5	"You have to be more outgoing the first week than I think you would be normally." "Chat to the person next to you [in lectures] and you'll easily make friends in all the different classes by doing that... and not to be put off by the fact that they might look very different or whatever like that." "Try everything, try to fit in with other people; don't sit back and watch and don't give up."
Live on campus in your first year	4	"I don't think I'd like uni half as much as I did if I hadn't lived on campus. Most definitely live on-campus. It's so much easier... it's sort of forced on you to talk to people and do things and always go out and do things like that"
Have goals	3	"You've got to aim for something and for me that was the degree." "[You must set out] a few goals for yourself." "If you don't know what you want to do and you end up having a go at all these different things and you don't end up specialising in any one area then you kind of leave yourself short."
Go to university	2	"Go for it!"
Realise all students are experiencing emotions similar to your own	2	"[Realise that everyone] is in the same boat [and that] they're quite happy to chat to you." "[People will] support you and help you... because they're going through the same thing."
Go to a university as close to home as possible	2	"Stay closer to home if your course allows it."
Know somebody at the university you intend to attend	1	"Try and get to know somebody that goes to that university beforehand."

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Join rural student organisations	1	"[Join the] Country Students Group."
Ensure that you choose the degree that is right for you	1	"Be sure the degree they're doing is going to get them where they want to go."
Realise that university is hard work and not all fun	1	"It's not all fun and games like a lot of people think it is."
Be prepared to be away from friends and family	1	"Be prepared for the Big Bad World."
There are ways to get into university if your TER is low	1	"If you want to do something bad enough, there are ways to get to do what you want to do. I had to go the back-way [TAFE before university] to get to uni and I think a lot of kids probably don't realise there are those options in the city."
Have fun	1	"Have some fun. Don't be so hung up on doing all the work all the time. You've got a lot of freedom, which is good, and just enjoy yourself."

Question 16: ***Is it a good idea for rural students attending a university outside their home location to live on campus during their first year of university?***

Table 13

Specific Point	Number of Comments	Examples of Comments Made independent living benefits
Yes, live on campus during your first year	12	"They [on-campus students] had a really good social support system [and] they had so many friends within the first six months whereas I was still making them." "[residences] take a lot of country students so there are a lot of people from similar backgrounds... going through the same thing." "...[you have] lots of new friends straight off, so you didn't have to worry about walking off to university by yourself and feeling lost." "In hindsight, it would have been good [to live on campus] because so many people in university make the best friends on campus." "You were very independent, yet you had a lot of people to confide in and it was just great. It was a very party atmosphere and I suppose for your first year that's what it should be too because you've got to meet lots of people." "Everyone's kind of got the same interests, everyone's away from home, we all discover it together so it made it much easier being in college."
No, it is not necessary to live on campus during your first year	1	"I thought I'll be out there enough [on campus], I'll go home at night and get away from the place a bit." "It would be too easy to be distracted from your work [living on campus]."
No comment	3	

NB It needs noting that the responses to this final question were made by six students who lived on campus, six who resided off campus but not at home, and three who lived at home.

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Discussion

The responses to the questions comprising the interview schedule, the follow-up probes, and the subsequent elaboration by interviewees provided a rich description of the first year experience in retrospect. A number of themes emerged from the interview reports. These included the kinds of challenges faced by first year university students, the ways in which these challenges were confronted, and the sorts of advice which students would offer to those contemplating tertiary studies. The themes are highlighted below.

Challenges faced by first year students

- the development of new friendships
- the forging of an independent identity
- a lack of direction from others
- an intimidating large campus environment
- financial pressures
- missing contacts with home location

Successful strategies employed and necessary conditions to meet these challenges

- quickly initiate close friendships
- reside on campus
- maintain motivation
- use your Orientation Week experience to advantage
- retain contact with high school friends attending the same university
- be willing to leave home setting
- participate in Rural Student Awareness programmes
- defer studies temporarily

Advice proffered to potential university students who want to be successful students

- be outgoing
- reside on campus as this arrangement is often a home for 'rural kids'
- show strong commitment to your goals
- be prepared to leave family and friends or stay close to home if your course permits it
- realise other students are experiencing difficulties similar to you

Implications

At a time when universities are under pressure to be more efficient and client-focused, it is important to recognise the conditions necessary to ensure a satisfactory transition from secondary school to tertiary study and thereby reduce student attrition. If university administrators and academics are to take heed of the expressed concerns of students in this study, then the following actions appear to be warranted.

Matters for University Administrators

Universities need to support students by

1. providing appropriate information about the nature of relevant courses such as Tertiary Awareness forums and career guidance programmes.

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2. identifying the challenges and concerns university students face during their first year of study, targeting the special needs of students from rural and isolated backgrounds;
3. establishing programmes which support the school-to-university transition process e.g., student service orientation and tutoring; and,
4. promoting awareness of the sources of assistance available.

Issues for Academics

Academics need to be more aware of where their students have come from, the general concern of first year students, and the diversity of background, interest, and motivation of the student population. This means, as well as being responsible for teaching subjects, they should also set in train processes which assist students in recognising diversity and developing an awareness of both the corporate life of the university and academic traditions.

Advice to All Concerned with Student Welfare

In addition to the advice above, the results of this study suggest that it is necessary to develop a climate of openness, free exchange, and support in which students can question both themselves and the creators of the educational and social environment. This is particularly important for students from rural locations where few friends and relatives have had the opportunity of a university education.

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Rural Students Continuing Their Studies in University Contexts

by

Brian Hemmings, Russell Kay, and Doug Hill
Charles Sturt University (Riverina)

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a longitudinal study of Riverina-based senior secondary school students who began university studies within three years of completing the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC). Information was collected by survey instruments during Years 10 and 11, and whilst students were attending university. School records provided data on school achievement in the Year 10 Reference Tests and the HSC results in Year 12. The findings from a discriminant analysis showed that a combination of five school variables was able to accurately classify students subsequently proceeding to university. A logit analysis, based on these same students, demonstrated that two variables, namely, HSC performance and university course satisfaction/enjoyment, were significant influences on pass rate in first year tertiary study and that the latter was more important. The paper concludes with a discussion of a tentative model which describes the key factors affecting tertiary success.

Introduction

Much has been written about the reasons students elect to continue their studies beyond high school (see e.g., de Rome & Lewin, 1984; Dobson, Sharma, & Haydon, 1996; Hayden & Carpenter, 1990; Lam, 1982); and, additionally, why these same students persist with their studies to graduation (see e.g., Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Jackson, Gardner, & Sullivan, 1993; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983, Power, 1987). Researching in an Australian context, Hayden and Carpenter (1990) reported that a combination of individual attributes and situational characteristics predicted whether or not school leavers chose to study at the tertiary level. In particular, they found that school achievement, parental encouragement, motivation, and school type were the main determinants of moving from school to higher education. There is also evidence from a Canadian study that individual and situational factors including socio-economic background, school-initiated employment experiences, and personal values all contribute to the decision to enrol in tertiary education (Lam, 1982).

Apart from concentrating on the transition from secondary school to higher education, researchers have been concerned with student persistence and success at the tertiary level. Of special significance is the corpus of work that describes the experiences of first year university students. Two Australian reports, notably Power, Robertson, and Baker (1987) and McInnis, James, and McNaught (1995), have emphasised a number of factors which relate to successful study performance, including a good background in English and Mathematics, high motivation, a supportive family environment, strong course commitment, and an academic

application. Nevertheless, it needs highlighting that the authors of these reports have not fully explored the relationship between and among the various factors noted above. That is, they have not tried to demonstrate how individual factors or groups of factors might link to, explain, and /or predict student success.

Not surprisingly, there is a paucity of literature which specifically focuses on rural-based students who choose to enrol in university courses. The information which is available is restricted to North American studies such as Elliott (1987) and thus is not readily transferable to the Australian circumstance. Although some preliminary work has been carried out locally to consider the problems that rural-based students face in adjusting to university (Hemmings, Boylan, Hill, & Kay, 1996), no Australian study has been undertaken to: 1) isolate the factors which explain and predict continuation to university for rural-based students; and, 2) investigate the determinants of first year university success for rural-based students.

The purpose of the present study was twofold. First, rural-based students who continued their studies to university were compared with their counterparts whose short-term plans did not include university study; and second, the academic performance of the rural-based tertiary students was examined as a means of identifying predictors of academic success at the completion of first year university study.

Method

Design and Sample

The general design of the study was longitudinal with data collected during two phases. Phase 1 included the period late 1991 to early 1994 and allowed data to be gathered from Year 10 to Year 12. The second phase of the study incorporated the period 1994 to 1996 and used the responses of participants who began their tertiary studies in this time span. Participants were drawn originally from seven state co-educational secondary schools in the Riverina region and tracked until they either withdrew from school or university. At the conclusion of Phase 1 useable information was obtained from 281 participants. A sub-sample of these participants (N=125), who subsequently enrolled in university, was eligible for inclusion in the second data collection phase. As a consequence of the design set, it was possible to follow relatively large numbers of students for several years, permitting periodic assessments when, and if, required.

Instrumentation and Procedure

Two different data collection tools were used, namely, survey and a student database. Surveys were administered periodically during Years 10 and 11, and item selection was guided by previous research. These surveys sought information about demographic, situational, and attitudinal factors. Items seeking responses about the degree of family encouragement received and the sources of financial support tapped information which was used to develop a 'Family Background' (FBT) composite measure. This scale was extracted from a principal components analysis using the SPSS program titled FACTOR (SPSS, 1988). The same statistical procedure was followed to produce three more measures: 1) 'Year 10 School Achievement' (IA1) which was derived from a composite of state-wide Year 10 Reference Test results in English, Mathematics, and Science; 2) 'Goal Commitment' (GCA1) was defined by reducing three separate items dealing with aspirations and job expectations to one factor; and, 3) 'School Commitment' (SCT2) was made up of nine items concerned with school satisfaction and schooling responsibilities. These items were reduced to a two-factor structure. The criterion measure for this phase of the study was the dichotomous variable (continuation to university or non-continuation) and was labelled CONUNI. For a comprehensive discussion of the instruments used during Phase 1, readers are asked to refer to Hemmings (1994).

An additional survey instrument was developed as a means of gathering data during Phase 2. This survey was posted to 125 eligible respondents, that is, those students who enrolled in a university course during 1994-96. After a follow-up reminder, complete data were received from 54 participants, representing a 43% response rate. The key items forming this survey were all based on questions posed by McInnis et al. (1995). Three scales, labelled 'Course' (COURSE), 'Student Identity' (STUDID), and 'Sense of Purpose' (SENPURP), were derived from the items in the survey by way of a principal components analysis. The results of this particular analysis are presented in the Appendix. The criterion variable (PSRATE) was measured using a single item which distinguished between students who passed all subjects during their first year and those who failed at least one subject in the same period.

The student database was designed to monitor progress of the sample to determine which participants were available for future questioning. As well, the database was used by school principals to record both Year 10 Reference Test achievements and Year 12 HSC results (TER).

Results

Phase 1

A correlation analysis was carried out to explore the relationships between the predictor variables defined in the previous section. This analysis was performed using the SPSS program CORRELATION (SPSS, 1988) and the results are summarised in Table 1. An inspection of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients revealed that the direction of the measures was as anticipated but that School Commitment was poorly associated with the other predictor variables, with the exception of Goal Commitment. Interestingly, all other relationships were significant ($p<.01$).

Table 1
Correlations among the Phase 1 predictor variables

Variable	FBT	IA1	GCA1	SCT2	TER
FBT	1.00				
IA1	.31*	1.00			
GCA1	.26*	.45*	1.00		
SCT2	.00	.10	.28*	1.00	
TER	.27*	.79*	.46*	.06	1.00

* $p<.01$ (2-tailed)

In order to determine the best linear combination of variables which distinguish between students who continue to university (117 cases) and those who do not (164 cases), a discriminant analysis was performed. The discriminant function was highly significant (Wilks' lambda=.403, chi-square=251.438, df=5, $p<.0001$), and all the predictor variables, namely, Family Background, Year 10 School Achievement, Goal Commitment, School Commitment, and Year 12 (HSC) Results, met the criterion for inclusion in the function. The canonical correlation between the criterion and the set of predictors was .773. This canonical correlation indicated that almost 60% of the variance was shared by the linear combination of the five variables. Moreover, if TER were omitted from the discriminant analysis, the four remaining predictor variables still explained more than 36% of the variance in the criterion measure.

The results of the classification analysis are presented in Table 2 and show that 82.9% of the group planning to continue their studies at university were correctly classified, whereas 9.8% of the group not continuing their studies to the university level were misclassified. The percentage of 'grouped' cases that were correctly classified was 87.2%.

Table 2
Classification results for continuers and non-continuers

Actual Group	No. of cases	Predicted	
		Continuers	Non-continuers
Continuers	117	97 (82.9%)	20 (17.1%)
Non-continuers	164	16 (9.8%)	148 (90.2%)

Percentage of 'grouped' cases correctly classified: 87.2%

Phase 2

Table 3 presents the results of a correlation analysis based on the variables identified in Phase 2 of the study.[1] This analysis was performed using the SPSS program CORRELATION (SPSS, 1988). The direction of the correlations was as expected. There were significant relationships between pass rate and obtaining a good TER (r=.39) and finding satisfaction and enjoyment in a chosen course (r=.33). Course enjoyment and satisfaction was associated significantly with a strong sense of identity as a university student (r=.50) and a firm commitment to future university and related goals (r=.41). In line with predictions, TER was not significantly related to the three student attitudinal variables viz., COURSE, STUDID, and SENPURP.

Table 3
Intercorrelation matrix of Phase 2 variables

Variable	PSRATE	COURSE	STUDID	SENPURP	TER
PSRATE	1.00				
COURSE	.33*	1.00			
STUDID	.18	.50**	1.00		
SENPURP	.17	.41**	.41**	1.00	
TER	.39**	.05	.04	.14	1.00

* p<.05, ** p<.01 (2-tailed)

In order to distinguish between those students who passed all their attempted subjects during first year university, and those who failed at least one subject in the same period, a logit analysis was conducted using the SPSS program titled PROBIT (SPSS, 1988). Logit analysis is deemed the most appropriate multivariate procedure for analysing a skewed dichotomous criterion variable (Hanushek & Jackson, 1977). This feature is pertinent to the present study as the dichotomous criterion variable (PSRATE) split 68.3% and 31.7%. That

[1] In this particular analysis, the PSRATE variable was measured on a continuous scale from 0 to 1, and was defined as the number of subjects in which at least a grade of pass was obtained by the student divided by the total number of first year university subjects in which the student was enrolled. This definition is very similar to the one used by West (1985).

is, the majority of the participants passed all of their subjects. However, it is worth repeating that the number of cases used for this particular analysis was only 54.

The results of the logit analysis are presented in Table 4. In this table the regression coefficients, their standard errors, and the t-ratio values[2] are displayed. The variables which are significantly related at the five per cent level to PSRATE have been asterisked. As can be seen from this display, the pass rate was influenced significantly by two variables: HSC performance (TER) and university course satisfaction/enjoyment (COURSE).

Table 4
Logit results for pass rate

Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio
TER	.00021	.00011	2.02295*
COURSE	.17550	.08437	2.08005*
STUDID	.10954	.10511	1.04214
SENPURP	.06372	.15348	.41516

* $p < .05$ [pseudo $R^2 = .534$]

A by-product of the logit analysis was the calculation of a statistic known as pseudo R^2. The pseudo R^2 was computed using a chi-square value. Although the pseudo R^2 statistic should not be considered in 'variance explained' terms, it does serve a useful purpose in that it shows how well a set of predictor variables relates to a criterion measure (Walsh, 1987). As highlighted in Table 4, the statistic was .534. Taken together, the four predictor variables, offered a good prediction of which students from rural backgrounds are successful in their first year university studies.

As a means of shedding further light on the nature of the relationships between and among the variables in Phase 2 of the study, path analytical procedures were adopted. Path analysis, through multiple regression techniques, can detect the indirect and direct influences of predictor variables on each other and on criterion variables (Kerlinger, 1986). The first step in the path analytical procedures was taken using the SPSS program REGRESSION (SPSS, 1988). This regression analysis, with COURSE as the criterion measure, yielded two standardised regression (beta) weights which can be considered as path coefficients (Heise, 1975). The next step following these determinations, involved the construction of a path model (see Figure 1). As can be seen in this model, both TER and COURSE have significant direct effects on PSRATE, and STUDID is impacting directly and significantly on COURSE.[3]

[2] One-tailed values of t were used because the direction of the relationship between measures was hypothesised as yielding a positive r.

[3] The criterion for representing a significant path coefficient was $p < .05$. Additionally, it was assumed that if the distribution of the variable PSRATE had permitted the use of a regression analysis, then the two

The other variable represented, namely, SENPURP has a substantial direct effect on COURSE ($p<.07$). Nevertheless, because these calculations were derived from a relatively small sample size (N=54), the path model depicted should be viewed as a tentative one.

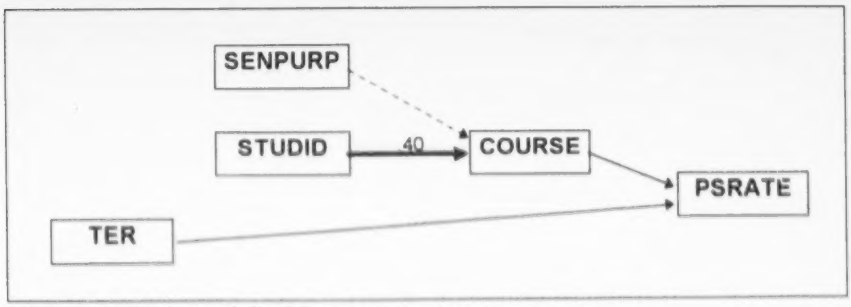

Figure 1. *Path model of first year university pass rate*

Discussion

In the first phase of this study a discriminant analysis was undertaken to assess the extent to which a set of variables, including two school achievement measures (at Year 10 and Year 12), a family background measure, and two personal measures (i.e., school commitment and goal commitment), predicted an individual's likelihood of continuing to university. As has been reported the complete set of measures significantly predicted this outcome. Certainly this result might be expected because of the importance of Year 12 school achievement as measured by the TER in determining an individual's eligibility to enter university. However, the more interesting result is that when TER was excluded from the analysis the remaining set of measures accounted for 36 percent of the variance of the criterion measure. This represents almost two thirds of the variance accounted for by the full set of predictor variables. Most of this variance seems to be accounted for by the Year 10 achievement measure, since when it is excluded from the analysis the amount of variance accounted for by the remaining variables, although still significant, drops to 15 per cent.

These results from the first phase of the study illustrate that although academic achievement variables represent the most important predictors of whether students will continue to university study, there are other family background and attitudinal factors which also are related to this outcome. Moreover, the relatively high predictive effect of Year 10 achievement indicates that academic achievement prior to the final two years provides a good indication of a student's likely future with respect to university entrance. The very high correlation between TER and Year 10 (r= 79) achievement demonstrates that in spite of the more flexible subject choices available in the final years of secondary schooling a student's academic success is largely predictable at the end of Year 10. Thus, for this sample of rural

betas relating to it would be significant; that is, given the significance of the two unstandardised

students academic achievement, which remained relatively stable throughout the final years of schooling, was the most important predictor of continuation to university, even though these other family and attitudinal factors were also related to this outcome.

The second phase of this study was designed to examine factors which were related to students' success in their first year of university study. The correlation analysis revealed that student success, as measured by the proportion of subjects passed, was significantly related to both TER and course satisfaction/enjoyment. However, this latter variable was also found to be significantly correlated with two other attitudinal variables, namely, student identity and sense of purpose. A subsequent logit analysis, in which the student success variable was reduced to a dichotomous measure, confirmed that only the school academic achievement measure, viz., TER, and course satisfaction/enjoyment predicted a student's likelihood of passing all their first year subjects. Moreover, a second logit model including only TER and course satisfaction showed that although both these measures were significant predictors of university success, that the latter variable was the more important predictor.

Although the other two attitudinal variables, student identity and sense of purpose, did not emerge as significant predictors in the logit model for university success, they were significantly correlated with course satisfaction. A multiple regression model predicting course satisfaction/enjoyment indicated that student identity was a significant predictor and that sense of purpose was only marginally non-significant. In view of the rather small sample employed, the possible influence of this second predictor may be worth noting (see Figure 1). The combination of these two models, that is the logit and multiple regression, indicates that there appear to be two separate sources of influence on students' success in their first year of university study. One source is the rather predictable factor of prior academic achievement and the other is the attitudinal measure of course satisfaction. This second source of influence seems to stem from a set of related attitudinal measures, namely, student identity and sense of purpose.

Despite the fact that the model depicted here is based on rather limited empirical evidence, the relationships represented are consistent with several well-established perspectives in the literature pertaining to adolescent development. For example, there is an abundance of evidence which suggests that adolescents are engaged in the formation of an identity, which includes a vocational dimension (Santrock, 1996). There is also a body of research literature which testifies to the importance of personality and interests as predictors of vocational choice (Holland, 1987). Thus, the substantial influence of course satisfaction

and enjoyment in this study appears to be consistent with the existing research evidence on the formation of vocational identities by adolescents.

The results relating to the influence of prior academic achievement are in many respects predictable. The measure of prior academic achievement used in this study was the TER, which was also invariably used by universities to select these students. This factor alone would lead one to predict a positive significant relationship between TER and university success. However, in this study course satisfaction/enjoyment was found to have a greater influence on the dichotomous measure of student success at university. The apparent lesser influence of TER may be caused by the rather truncated range of TER scores within the sample. Thus, although the evidence from this study supports a model of dual influence, that is course satisfaction/enjoyment and prior academic achievement on first year university success, it would be presumptuous to draw definite conclusions about the relative influence of these two factors. Further study of larger samples of students, possibly extending beyond the first year of university, would be required to make comparisons of this kind.

APPENDIX

Table 5
Results of the principal components analysis

Factor	Variable Label	Factor Loading	Total per cent of shared variance
COURSE	ENJOY	90	75.1
	STIM	87	
	UNISAT	82	
STUDID	LIKE	69	66.5
	ATMOS	82	
	SUITS	85	
	EXPEC	76	
SENPURP	REASON	86	72.6
	LIFEGO	89	
	FUTURE	82	

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Leigh Creek Area School
Royal Zoological Society of South Australia
Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby (Andu) Reintroduction Project

A successful school project was featured when the contingent stopped at Monarto Zoological Park. The scene had been set by screening a segment of video on bus. After a tour of the Park's facilities ...

Director, Mr David Langdon welcomed all to the park. Mr Ed McAllister (Director, Royal Zoological Society of SA) presented a background to the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby Reintroduction Project, how the site was chosen and how the project had benefited from the school's involvement.

Colin Murdoch (teacher) outlined Leigh Creek Area School's involvement

As a teacher in a rural school I believe it is one of my responsibilities to be on the look out for interesting community projects to become involved on in order to develop interesting local educational programs for my students

When Sue of ETSA (land owner and key sponsor) and Sue Conaghty of the Zoological Society approached the school to see if they wished to be involved in a PR role for this release program I was keen. When I found out how often we would be able to have speakers in our classrooms to explain aspects of the project I was pleased to be involved. When I discovered that the main members of the "adult team" really valued the student participation and were offering autonomy and responsibility not just tokenism I knew we were on a winner. When it became obvious that this was a long term project, perhaps fifty years, I knew that we had a project which would be the envy of the world.

It is this autonomy and responsibility which flows through classroom activities which have real audiences beyond the classroom which provides the powerfulness of this project.

We have in front of you two key examples of this.

Many teachers have used model making to help Middle Secondary students understand geographical concepts of contours and map making. I would suggest many models are made and displayed in the classroom, perhaps the library and then "filed". Participation in this project allowed my students to know from the outset that their work would have those audiences and then be used by Adelaide Zoo and others to allow people who couldn't travel to the site to gain a better understanding. Students knew other students and people like yourselves would judging their work.

The other example is the newsletter. Katie will tell you more about how it is put together and what it meant to her to be part of that, but I must reinforce that this is the official newsletter of the project and is circulated to all interested people across Australia. It is produced by Year 9 students at Leigh Creek Area School. The words and the information are at the level of the adults as the students are the publishers and not the jopurnalists, ... yet. They benefit from enormous amounts of consultation with Zoo staff (who are more expert and often more particular than their teacher). Within our school it is a flagship of the potential for student work to serve purposes beyond the class pinup board and the school newsletter. It shows that people "out there" are interested in what we are learning in the classroom and it has other teachers and students in our school and others looking for similar tasks they can be involved in.

I really wish to thank Ed McAllister and members of the team not just for inviting us to be involved but for having real faith in the students of Leigh Creek Area School to participate fully in the project.

Katie Bedding (Yr 10 student) outlined Leigh Creek Area School's involvement.

ANDU PROJECT

by

Katie Bedding

My name is Katie Bedding and as a student of Leigh Creek Area School, South Australia, I along with the Year 9 class from 1996, have been a part of the Andu project. This continued on throughout late last year.

We had the opportunity to speak with professional people from various groups; this lead us to many excursions around the area where wild Andy may be. This helped us feel like professionals as we had hand-on experiences on these excursions with the professionals.

The idea was then to share our knowledge and expertise with other people including the younger students of Leigh Creek Area School. We went into classrooms and taught lessons. We decided that to be professional we needed a letterhead and logo so this was designed and put to use. To have contact with the zoo people, faxing was an easier method than mailing. A lot of phone calls were conducted to speed up the process as well. Our class was responsible for the official launch of the project in Leigh Creek. This involved arranging a function for 70 people, particularly writing out invitations, decorating and working out the seating plan. We practised our public relation skills by welcoming and ensuring that everyone was fitted with a name tag.

In the last holidays, a group of students, some from the Andu project and some not, camped in the Flinders Ranges with some scientists from Adelaide. We carried out the wallaby count and helped the scientists with their research projects. We weren't just watching and learning from them, we were working with them. A couple of students are now using this experience as a part of their secondary studies. One student found a lizard that was previously unrecorded in the Leigh Creek area.

One project which I personally became really involved in, was the newsletter. this was the official communication between the project managers in Adelaide and anyone else who wanted to know. I negotiated with Sue from the Adelaide Zoo with regards to which topics and authors would be appropriate. So I sent faxes out to them with deadlines. On receiving the articles back, they had to be typed up and a design of the layout was made to make the articles fit. Overall we did 7 drafts of the newsletter. It was a big relief to me when I sent off the final draft to the publishers. Other students have completed the 3rd edition and the 4th is in production.

I now hope that the project continues on and more wallabies are released in the near future. I really enjoyed working on this project and hope future students have the same chance that I've had.

Delivering the Arts Curriculum in isolated settings- Outback Eisteddfod

by
Ray Marino
Leigh Creek Area School

INTRODUCTION

The prospects for a better future for Australia's rural people, places and communities are dependent upon a range of educational options and activities. Our rural schools and the system can provide a powerful starting point for rural redevelopment.

The Arts continue to provide a vehicle for the community to integrate either as participants or spectators or both.

In the Port Augusta District [now known as the Far North District], Arts education across twenty seven schools, some very isolated, has been providing students with opportunities to study drama, dance, music and visual arts, using a variety of curriculum delivery systems, camps, excursions and tours.

MUSIC CAMP WITH DON BURROWS

For many years the Instrumental Music Programme has offered a range of music opportunities, culture and the development of skills for students. Each year students from across the district unite in a camp that is held in different locations [Leigh Creek, Hawker, Quorn, Woomera, Roxby Downs]. This year 1997 we are planning for the camp to be in Coober Pedy.

In 1996 the District Music Management Group comprising : music staff, parents, school staff and Regional Coordinator, planned the music camp held at Leigh Creek Area School. One significant difference included the talents, expertise and motivation of Mr Don Burrows, one of Australia's foremost jazz woodwind greats. Don Burrows, along with Kevin Hunt his keyboard accompanist, lead a team of professional music teachers including : Evan Patton, Nick Krieg, Sue, Ben Ramsay, Brenton Osborne, Judy Hann, Dave McRae and myself, to three days of exciting workshops, culminating in a community performance. Don and the team inspired in excess of seventy students ranging from experienced high schoolers to newcomer primary students.

A major venture such as this could not happen without community and parental support. Students from across the district were billeted by Leigh Creek parents, who also catered for all the meals.

The major employer in Leigh Creek ETSA [now South Australia Generation Corporation] also supported by providing venues and accommodation for the special guests.

Success for all our students came in the form of working alongside an Australian legend, picking up hints and skills on how to get the best out of an instrument. Performing on stage with Don and music professionals in the middle of rural Australia was another success that students and staff of the Port Augusta District experienced and will value for many years.

Don's feedback to the management group was extremely positive and he is planning to return during 1997. In an interview with Ian McNamara on 'Australia All Over' on national radio

programme, Don spoke very highly of the students and staff who attended the camp, mentioning the District and Leigh Creek Area School in a very positive manner.

Students are looking forward to working with Don and his team again in 1997. Plans to date need to take into account 'Opera in the Outback' during September 1997 as Don will be performing at the Prairie Hotel in Parachilna [66 kms south of Leigh Creek]. Thus, Don will be in the district and we hope to hold the camp to coincide with his visit to this area.

Other successes that emanated from this event are included :

- A video project where senior Media Studies students, inspired by their teacher Colin Murdoch, prepared publicity material for Imparja Television and produced a video of the camp and the final performance. Thus, success was shared across the viewing area for Imparja.

- Senior Art students and their teacher Kristy Schneider, designed PR material and polo shirts with silk screening for all participants.

- A technical production team of students, helped by staff [Colin Murdoch, Nick Wuttke, Neville Crawford, Barry Zander) were able to learn skills in sound, lighting and concert production.

This integrated approach enabled provision of an effective and successful teaching environment for a contextual approach for teaching the Arts in a rural area of South Australia. The enormous benefits gained from such an enterprise has long lasting, positive effects on all who were able to participate. All this occurring in the middle of the Flinders Ranges, added to the concept that you do not need to be in the Festival Centre to learn and experience success in the Arts by working alongside such giants as Don Burrows.

THE MARREE OUTBACK EISTEDDFOD

Marree [650 kms north of Adelaide] hosted the third Outback Eisteddfod for rural and isolated Australian schools. This Eisteddfod originated in Birdsville, Queensland, in 1994. The 1997 venture was the largest, which included fifteen schools travelling from places such as Bedourie Qld, Ardrossan, Koonibba, Mintabie and Woomera.

During the week of 26-30 August, Marree came alive to the sound of music, dance and drama, as between 200 and 300 students, staff and parents from some of the most isolated schools in Australia travelled in excess of 1,000 kms one way to compete in the Outback Eisteddfod. A large portion of the students were Aboriginal.

To help with the success, we obtained major sponsorship from Fender Australia, Bongo Prints, Derringers Music, Western Mining Company, Woolworths, local employers and businesses. ATSIC and the local Community Progress Association provided venues and catered for this large crowd over the five days.

This Eisteddfod was designed and developed to give rural/outback children a unique opportunity to experience working with groups of their peers and performing in front of large audiences not usually found in geographically isolated areas. Most of the students access Music/Drama/Dance from School of the Air using distance education technology, or from talented locals. For some this is the only chance to work in a large performance ensemble and experience success in the Arts.

All schools undertake enormous fundraising commitments to travel and in some cases the whole school population attends eg Birdsville, Koonibba, Nepabunna and Mintabie. Some schools travel for a whole day to allow their students to experience this event.

The 1997 organising committee comprised staff from Marree Aboriginal School. The team was lead by Site Manager Sandice McAulay, Sue Dadleh, Andrew Storah, Jenny Caldwell, Janine Oldfield and Nick Wuttke. The parent and community group was lead by Shirley Oldfield .....

Judges for this event were Nick Toy, Dave McRae and Catherine Godlee. Technical assistance by Barry Zander, Colin Murdoch and Ray Marino, ensured that all the items obtained support and the presentations were smooth and professional.

The successes from this project include :

- confidence building;
- working in teams [other than sport];
- building networks for staff and students;
- setting goals and achieving them;
- rural areas can provide real opportunities for rural students;
- sharing good practise in the Arts;
- generating community support for our isolated schools.

The feedback from participants, students, parents, staff and community members was very positive and supported the notion of continuing with this venture. In 1997 the suggestion is to hold the Eisteddfod in Bedourie Qld.

The above two initiatives - District Music Camp and Outback Eisteddfod - are just two examples of our Country Districts development mechanisms to allow rural students to participate and experience success without transferring to a large city or regional centre.

Recent publicity about academic achievements at Snowtown, Booleroo Centre and other country and rural centres add to the notion that country and in particular rural schools can be just as successful in a wide range of areas just like their city counterparts.

When celebrating success in rural education we need to also take into account the hidden successes that are hard to measure; for example, many students access R-7, R-10 education in the rural sector and then transfer to larger centres to complete their education at private or state high schools. In these cases the rural schools are rarely acknowledged for laying the strong foundation for a successful future.

In the main, rural educators understand the importance of preparing their students to succeed in the urban environment. These students must also be equipped to be successful in the local rural context. There is consensus in both rural and urban areas that students need to develop strong basic academic skills. The Arts can and do play an important part in developing strong communication and interpersonal skills which are necessary and important in later life for gaining employment, further education and being a positive member of the community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Country/rural schools should not allow geographical isolation to limit the opportunities provided to their students. In the Port Augusta District [now the Far North District] we have been entrepreneurial in setting up projects that bring the 'Best to the Outback'. Using the

Arts we have been able to provide positive alternatives that allow our students to experience successful educational outcomes and celebrate achievements in their local or similar environment.

Partnerships, Technology and Teaching: Celebrating the Link Between Universities and Rural Communities.

by

Dr. Ian W. Gibson

Mrs Sheila King

Abstract

In recognising the increasing pressure to contribute to the construction of a new paradigm of schooling appropriate for the new century, this paper discusses the impact of partnerships and technology on teaching and emphasises the value of relationships between universities and schools in enhancing the quality of educational services provided to learning communities and specifically, learners in rural communities. By referencing both current research and policy developments and presenting case studies related to innovations in organisational collaboration, technology use and the administration of programs, it is the intention of the authors to both raise awareness of existing examples of successful innovations which have led to excellence in education, and to provide a ready resource for those wishing to further their understanding of programs that have added value to the educational benefits derived by those learners involved. Celebrations of existing collections of successful innovations is referenced infrequently in the literature and it is the intention of this paper to overcome that deficit.

Introduction

Australian schooling is undergoing a revolution in structure, in management, and in organisation. In recognising these revolutions and the concomitant need to redefine the culture of schooling, many state level systems have undergone a massive series of restructuring exercises which have attempted to purge the old guard, traditionalist culture from the new reality of compulsory schooling appropriate for school education in the new millennium. The building blocks of this new culture of schooling are a combination of old and new influences. Clearly, the process of teaching remains central to this new culture, but in itself, the definition of what teaching is, has undergone tremendous change. No longer is it appropriate to consider teaching as an isolated activity largely conducted by one adult upon a group of students in the confines of a single classroom. Rather, it is the learning that occurs, which is the central element of this new culture.

Additionally, it is increasingly recognised that the responsibility for schooling goes far beyond the school fence. A symptom of this change appears as increased community involvement in

school decision making. This sharing of responsibility has been in part, made possible by the advent of new communications technologies which have created opportunities for greater collaboration and networking and in part by the proliferation of successful partnerships between communities and agencies interested in enhancing education provision.

Further, in scanning the current literature related to partnerships, a variety of useful definitions is found creating a flexibility in partnership conception that provides few barriers to creative collaboration: an activity to achieve a professional outcome; formal legal agreements; loose associations; joint ventures. It would appear that there are as many attempts to explain partnerships as there are functioning partnership activities. What appears to be the common thread throughout these diverse orientations is that functioning and successful partnerships create a climate for innovation.

The majority of these characteristics of the new school culture is of course well known to rural community dwellers, for it is the focus on individuals and on community that define the core of many rural communities. Notwithstanding this rural reality however, it is likely that those in rural communities will stand to be the prime beneficiaries of the change resulting from this new orientation to schooling. While benefits will be felt by learners in all schools as a result of the infusion of appropriate technologies and increased involvement in schooling by community enterprises and supportive external partnerships, it is the learner in rural schools, gaining access to new resources, new partnerships and new communities, who will experience a proportionally larger impact than most.

It is the view of the authors of this paper, that it is the integration of these concepts of teaching, technology and partnerships, that is redefining the reality of schooling for the learner in the site based management, school community oriented world of Australian education in the late 1990s.

Literature

In April, 1995, the Office of Technology Assessment of the United States Congress published a report which focused upon the connection between teachers and technology. A major conclusion of this study was that inadequate attention had been paid to the analysis and development of teaching pedagogies associated with the use of teaching technologies and that inadequate developmental support provided to teachers barred the best use of new technologies in education. Further, the report went on,

technology, combined with suitably developed teaching and learning paradigms and properly trained teachers, offered a dramatic solution to problems of motivation, drop out, and flexible access to educational services and support for remote learners.

In Australia, recent developments in Federal government policy proposals regarding the nation-wide provision of access to communications and information networks and associated broadband services, imposed upon universities, and particularly Faculties of Education, the responsibility to ensure that appropriate teaching paradigms and pedagogies had been analysed, evaluated, developed and supported in institutions of higher learning, in association with the advent of the technologies themselves. This responsibility was clearly articulated in May, 1995 when a report commissioned by the Department of Employment, Education and Training, entitled National Policy Frameworks to Support the Integration of Information Technologies into University Teaching/ Learning, stated that "the new information technologies have significant implications for the nature and conduct of teaching and learning," (Moran, 1995, P2) and that universities should lead the way in discovering "how best to use the new technologies as practical, educational and cost effective tools." Further the report suggested that universities were also responsible for developing positive approaches to those "common and major transformations in their teaching, structures and cultures as the technologies increasingly affect most aspects of their operations" (Moran, 1995, P4). With such explicit expectations being placed upon university teaching generally, the responsibility for teacher education faculties to propagate a more far reaching cultural change in the teaching profession with each new generation of school teachers, is both immediate and paramount.

In recognising the importance of creating a defensible paradigm for the new culture of teaching brought about by the advent of appropriate information and communications technologies in educational settings, and the reliance upon partnerships sharing the responsibility for such a change, universities and school partnerships have begun to carve out pathways capable of becoming models for others to emulate.

In line with this theoretical and policy framework then, the remaining sections of this paper contain a selection of brief case studies illustrating the combined value of adopting appropriate technologies, incorporating functioning partnerships and developing innovative organisational arrangements in pursuing this new culture of schooling. These case studies describe innovations in technology use and organisational approaches relating to the enhancement of education and training in rural areas. It is the combined results of partnerships

of this type that are creating a foundation appropriate for schooling in the twenty -first century

Integrating Technology and Teaching: CDROM and Problem based Learning for the professional development of teachers. (Gibson and Albion, 1996)

Funded by an Australia wide competitive grant from the National Priority Reserve Fund related to teacher education, this project was conceived to integrate the best of interactive CDROM technology with a variety of examples of good teaching practice from the field of primary education. This project represented a successful attempt to provide professional development support to teachers who were interested in learning how to integrate technology into their classroom activities. Initially aimed at pre-service teacher education students who were completing their final year of university, this project was based upon the problem based learning paradigm that was an integral component of their course. With a strong emphasis upon a diagnostic, information gathering and solution generating approach to solving problems presented, this highly interactive CD-ROM used problems related to everyday teaching considerations such as physical setting, planning for teaching with technology, effects on pedagogical style, classroom management, technology sharing and school organisational issues to introduce the impact of technology in a contextualised fashion to non-technology using teachers.

With a strong emphasis upon the use of video extracts, teacher made materials, school and systemic documentation, and scenario development constructed from existing teaching settings, this CD-ROM replicates the reality of classroom decision making situations in simulated scenarios that are reminiscent of real life teaching, with the added bonus of an adventure game format. Decision points throughout the users progress in each of the problems presented will provide access to a large variety of resources, appropriate to the problem, in the form of conversations with teaching colleagues, visits to other classrooms, interviews with teachers and principals, planning documents, articles describing best teaching practice and research, and video and audio data bases related to a variety of appropriate topics.

Use of this CD-ROM is expected to result in desirable changes in the level of comfort and expertise in technology usage by non-technology using teachers in the form of:

1. increased confidence in their capacity to use technologies for teaching

2. increased ability to plan effectively for the use of technologies in teaching
3. increased ability to relate theory to practice when analysing and commenting upon classroom applications of technologies.

This interactive resource is a product of collaboration between large numbers of practicing teachers, administrators, school communities, university based production technicians and the researchers who are the project directors. This project is a prime example of the positive results of active collaboration between a variety of agencies using partnerships and technology to enhance learner opportunities in classrooms.

New Directions in Open Learning: Introducing information technology to rural high schools (Postle, Gibson, & Sturman, 1995)

In a joint project between three rural high schools and The University of Southern Queensland, a group of researchers are studying the process whereby previously non technology using teachers adapt to the presence of computers, access to the internet, electronic mail and voice communications in their classrooms. Focusing upon changes required in planning, pedagogical approaches, classroom management and professional development, this project is designed to produce a grounded understanding of issues related to technology integration that can then be fed back into the development of appropriate pre-service teacher education programs and the provision of professional development programs for practicing teachers.

Despite the promise that various communication and information technologies offer to schools, their potential is not being widely realised. Technology use in schools has yet to be tied to agendas for teaching and learning on a large scale. An aim of this project is to study the impact of integrating technology use with school based learning and teaching and to attempt to determine the degree of change likely to the predominant teaching paradigm. The key objective of the project is to measure the costs and benefits of the impact of technology on student learning, the management of learning in schools, the administration of schools, the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and the training of teachers.

Based upon a low-end hardware configuration featuring a computer capable of running the Electronic Classroom graphical transfer software program, graphical and textual scanners, digital cameras, a conference phone and the provision of two normal telephone lines to carry data and voice signals between participating organisations, this project is designed for ease of

use and ease of acquisition of existing communications infrastructure in order to encourage the involvement of other schools in the project.

Designed as a longitudinal study based upon university grant monies, the project provided basic equipment for school use and covered the cost of connection time for the first year or so. Both the university and the school system provided the necessary technological support structures that would be required from time to time. Each school was then to design both program usage and develop curriculum and policy directions for school usage. Apart from skill instruction on the equipment and software, little direction was provided on programmatic issues or issues related to teacher decision making.

Using a predominantly constructivist theoretical framework to guide this project, the first year of activity has seen evidence of enhanced student learning outcomes, a clear increase in access to previously unavailable teaching and learning resources and human expertise, critical reflection and evaluation of the development and implementation of alternative models for instruction, opportunities for access to alternative field experience for preservice teacher education students and a greater regard for partnerships in the learning process between schools, the university and community agencies.

Further results evident at this early stage apart from the obvious benefits of having staff and students trained in the use of communications and information technology has been the natural incorporation of the internet into classroom resource planning, a clear development of both teacher and learner skill in integrating information and communication technologies into the learning process, allowing students to exert control over their own learning and teachers to confidently manage technology-based learning, and an awareness of the potential and value of bringing together students from all over the world for collaborative projects and shared information.

After the first year of the project it was discovered that great variation occurred between schools in the style, direction and frequency of usage of this resource. The original conception of the project directors at the university has changed dramatically, and while the role of the Electronic Classroom software was designed to be central to the activity, each school has tended to focus their activities on intensive use of the internet and electronic mail. Computer usage has been accepted in each school as a crucial component of their view of schooling and each location has developed both policy and budget processes designed to support the

continued use of technology in their educational programs. The technology is now being seen as a tool designed to assist learning as opposed to being the object of instruction.

One of the target schools has developed relationships with schools in a variety of international contexts and has also begun to incorporate interactions with cohorts of pre-service teacher education students at the university as part of their educational program.

Windows into Classrooms - Two way interactive television and problem based learning (Gibson & Gibson, 1996, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c)

The "Windows into Classrooms" project used two way interactive television linkages with small rural schools and a problem based learning instructional approach to consolidate the concept and skill development of final year preservice teacher education students in their understanding of the teaching role in small rural schools. Focusing on curriculum planning and preparation for teaching in multigrade rural classrooms, students observed and reflected upon the problem solving activity and decision making processes displayed by practicing teachers in real time, televised, teaching sessions in remote locations, and then discussed with those teachers, via the technology, the thinking, planning and decision making processes which supported the activities observed.

In past offerings of this class, attempts to bring this real-life element into the program have been made through the use of problem based scenarios of day-to-day dilemmas faced by the beginning teacher. This project is a natural extension of the problem based activities that have evolved from work done by staff and students in the final year practicum unit in previous years.

The incorporation of interactive technology increased both the real time involvement of student teachers in their chosen profession, and also allowed student teachers to gain increased access to best practice, teacher decision making and the observation of real time, everyday situations being handled, analysed and reflected upon by teachers responsible for the decisions being made. The focus upon a problem solving approach to teaching immersed the student teacher in situations derived from real teaching environments, and encouraged the collegial analysis of problem situations and the sharing of solutions and various perspectives on a single situation.

The immediacy and spontaneity of these interactive sessions created a highly motivating learning environment for student teachers, and coincidentally, a situation in which participating teachers and school pupils and their rural communities benefited in terms of professional development activities, opportunities for reflection and self-improvement, greater awareness of and comfort with technology use in classrooms and a cohesiveness in community relations that went far beyond expectations. An additional and unique aspect of this project was the concept of using distance education technology for the instruction of internal, on-campus students. That is by simulating a window of a classroom, on-campus students experienced the realities of day-to-day teaching in a variety of remote rural locations.

At the conclusion of this project, it became very clear that great benefits had occurred for every participant in the process. All agencies and individuals involved, the remote school communities, pupils and teachers, the university based project directors, technicians and support personnel, the state department of education personnel who provided their assistance and expertise and the many observers from agencies spanning a variety of educational orientations and levels both contributed and benefited. This project was dependent upon collaboration and the establishment of clearly articulated partnership objectives from conception to conclusion.

Negotiated Pre-service Internships and the Technology Resource Centre; The University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

The University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada has a formal partnership with local schools for their internship students. The students are able to negotiate directly with the school to set up an experience that will benefit all parties. Local partnerships ensure that local needs are met; that arrangements can be negotiated appropriately and that theory and practice are fully integrated.

One student at Jennie Emory Elementary School negotiated an experience in the area of Information Technology which allowed the student to utilise his expertise, expand his teaching skills and the school to establish a technology focus. One third of the student's negotiated program was spent teaching a Year 3/4 class. The student used a second third of the program to set up the school's Technology resource centre, write a school policy and program for information technology and provide staff inservice through staff meetings and individual training. This component was particularly effective as all staff were allocated a

laptop to assist with the integration of technology into the school curriculum. The final third of the program allowed the student to work alongside all staff in their own class time when they were implementing the technology curriculum.

Each school setting involved in the program negotiates the parameters of the partnership with the Faculty of Education. An interview process is used to identify the student best suited to the proposed program. School and university benefits are negotiated to allow appropriate levels of involvement, staff release and effective use of all resources available.

International Partnerships and International Practicum Experiences: Faculty of Education, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, USA

The Faculty of Education at Montana State University, Bozeman has developed a partnership with various schools in New Zealand and Europe. Collaboration on this project has provided partnership opportunities which provide global experiences for the students and the local communities they visit.

Throughout the final Semester the preservice students are able to opt for an elective in International Education which allows them to complete their final practicum in one of the participating schools. Schools are identified by university staff and support mechanisms are negotiated to ensure the students have an appropriate opportunity to complete the experience.

The students are given information on the travel, education system and setting appropriate to their school placement. The schools provide the students with an opportunity to complete the practicum in this way and assist the students to find accommodation in the local community. This is a collaborative approach to providing practical opportunities for preservice teachers. The benefits received by each participant in the partnership ensure its continuation for many years.

Local off campus programs for rural pre-service students: Lews Castle College, Isle of Lewis, Scotland.

Lews Castle College on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles of Scotland offers some of their courses through the developing University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). This is a partnership which allows students in rural and remote settings to complete their education without leaving their communities. This unique structure allows modes of delivery ranging from attendance at the nearest college site to remote learning facilities. Some courses allow

tutors to travel to remote centres and provide on-site training whilst others utilise the UHI network of facilities such as video conferencing, email, telephone tutorials etc. to access their course material. This partnership is being advanced by a network of colleges and research institutions, supported by local authorities.

The development of UHI has encouraged local involvement to meet local needs. This is not the "expert" importing a course that does not meet the local needs but rather a partner catering for the diverse range of needs for isolated students through a classroom without walls. This partnership allows a flexible approach to the access and provision of education.

Partnerships, pre-service education and rural experience: Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Australia.

The Faculty of Education at USQ has developed a number of partnerships to enable preservice teachers to experience teaching in rural and remote settings. Funding has been provided by PCAP, ICPA and the Educational Development Group of Unilink, USQ to help students to travel to more isolated areas of the state. Local school communities and ICPA families provide accommodation and meals to allow the students to complete a variety of experiences from 3 to 6 weeks in their schools. Schools of Distance Education, one and two teacher schools and P-10 Campuses have provided practicum opportunities for all graduating students in Primary and Early Childhood courses. Some partnerships have developed informally where others have been a regular, ongoing occurrence.

Partnerships of this nature allow an ongoing commitment to the preparation of preservice teachers for rural and isolated settings. The partnerships allow students to explore the experiences of teaching in rural communities and help them consider a career option as they move forward in the profession. These partnerships allow rural communities to showcase the unique characteristics of teaching in rural schools and to provide opportunities for interaction between the school community , preservice teachers and the university. The partnerships allow the university to expand the variety opportunities for practical experiences for students and indicate a commitment to the provision of quality education in rural areas.

Developing an Understanding of Partnerships and Protocols: A conference workshop activity. Society for Provision of Education in Rural Australia Annual Conference, Adelaide, 1997.

'Partnerships in Teacher Education' a recent report from the Board of Teacher Registration, Queensland (1997) explores both considerations for success and barriers to implementation in successful partnerships. The report highlights the need for shared decision-making and responsibility and for a collaborative planning process involving all parties. Assuming these, the report continues by emphasising the likelihood of achieving a professional outcome to successful joint ventures if the following significant variables are included in the process: careful planning; collaboration from all parties; effective communication; adequate resourcing; shared goals; and strong commitment.

In emphasising these collaborative requirements as pre-requisites for success, the report outlines some logical barriers to achieving successful outcomes for any partnership: poor planning; unclear aims; poor communication; poor resourcing; and unbalanced commitment.

In recognising these truths, workshop participants, involving teachers, administrators, community members and tertiary educators, discussed their views on partnerships in relation to their own specific field of education. The discussion was initially structured to cover the following points:

- The need for partnerships
- Descriptions of existing partnerships
- Recommendations for future partnerships
- The place of partnerships
- Structure for partnerships

Results of these discussions produced a list of key features contributing to successful partnerships. These key features included:

- The importance of having agreed common goals and shared values, so that all members are empowered to achieve a successful outcome. The partnership must be seen to be useful to both parties, with free flowing communication.
- Negotiation, collaboration and equitable participation.

- The need for each party to have an equal footing and the recognition that trust must underscore the partnership from all parties. Partners must work to maintain trust and keep the commitment or hand over to other appropriate parties to continue the partnership.
- The expectations that mature partnerships would allow roles to rotate according to need.
- The recognition that partners must be prepared to devote time, keep promises and demonstrate sensitivity.
- The need for all members of the partnership to have equal membership no matter what they contribute.
- An understanding that too often partnerships are rushed and must be given time to develop through a variety of recognised stages of maturation.
- The ability for partnerships to grow and change, releasing original members and recruiting new partners.

Throughout the discussion workshop participants described barriers that might hinder the success of a partnership. These barriers included:

- Poor communication and non- sharing of values and intentions.
- Existence of the "expert syndrome' instead of equal footing within the partnership
- The initiator being placed in the role of the expert while others became recipients
- The expert at one end imparting knowledge to others at the other end
- Lack of time or over commitment to other projects
- Insufficient funding to achieve partnership goals
- Institutional jealousies
- Demographic imbalances
- Poor management and support of communications technologies

It became clear during the workshop discussion that the promotion of a true partnership was dependent upon partners sharing ownership and responsibility and the understanding that shared funding and shared outcomes may require different inputs from each party with consideration of the skills, knowledge and resources of all partners. It was further recognised by these participants that in allowing partnerships to be flexible, to grow, or to change, the likelihood of successful outcomes was increased, even if priorities changed throughout the life of the partnership.

It was clear to this group of diverse educators that those involved in school settings would be increasingly required to develop the skill, knowledge and ability to participate in a variety of partnerships between school communities, and other professional bodies. It was thought that consideration of the ideas identified here would help ensure that such future partnerships would be successful.

Conclusion

The process whereby schools go about their business is undergoing tremendous change. Those schools choosing to ignore the potential and value of interactive technologies, productive partnerships and the consequent innovative climate that results are bound to fall behind in maintaining defensible levels of accountability to their learning clientele and their supporting communities. Australian schools and universities today must embrace the challenge of providing high quality and flexible access to education for all students regardless of their location. It is the appropriate use of new teaching technologies and a collaborative approach to education that hold the key to this challenge.

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Incidental Education (for Women) in Rural Communities

Valmai Crosby, State Training Co-ordinator,
South Australian Country Women's Association

Thank you for this opportunity of sharing in your celebration of Rural Education
If I had to choose five priorities in my life, CWA and Education would be two, so the chance to talk about both at once is a real pleasure. Please feel free to make this session interactive, and raise questions as we go along if you wish.

For you to choose this workshop, you must have some ideas about CWA (contact through family, or living in rural areas) What do you think of?? Don Dunstan called us the "blue rinse brigade" in the seventies. We do have a lamingtons, tea and scones image, but I hope that I can add another dimension for you, in the next half an hour.

CWA had its origins in the 20's with the need for isolated women to socialise, when their whole life revolved around housework and child-rearing. Mary Warnes, living on a sheep station out of Burra, used a bicycle to meet her sister from another station, once a month. They lived 30 miles apart, and pedalled to meet halfway. From their discussions, the first CWA was formed in SA, and Burra branch has celebrated its 70th anniversary. This was NOT a senior citizens organisation, although people may see it that way now. It was started by young women, although it attracted a wide range of ages in its membership. When I joined 30 years ago, many young mothers were involved, and I attended meetings with three pre-school little boys in tow. We have some very enthusiastic, active younger members, although a minority.

Only a few years after its inception, CWA became a network for distributing essential food and clothing parcels to desperately needy rural families during the depression. This occurred again recently during the rural crisis, when funds from benevolent institutions were channelled through CWA, during 95/96, supplementing our normal confidential Emergency Aid activities (e.g. Our baby parcels are extremely popular with social workers or any D o N who finds a mother has no means of providing clothing to take her baby home from hospital. The parcels are valued at $120 each, and include handknitted garments and toys and rugs donated by members, as well as nappies, jump suits, singlets and toiletries. (Av one per week, but 60 in thelast 6 months). Also 60 emergency aid applications in the same time frame, to a value of $9 800, to men and women, urban and rural recipients, for one-off payments, eg car registration, phone or power bills, funeral expenses, house fire victims etc.

Less well known, are the successful lobbying activities carried out at State and National levels By constitution, we are non-sectarian and non- party political. This has led to credibility with Governments of all colours, and the CWA has accumulated an enormous amount of political clout, to the extent that a State delegation is never refused an audience by the Premier. (We don't abuse the privilege for trivial matters.)

CWA is often asked to submit grass roots opinions to policy makers, particularly at Federal level, because of our unique national network of 50 000 members. A prime example was the survey carried out in the early 80's, through CWA members across Australia, at the request of the Office of the Status of Women in Canberra, which showed that the single thing rural women wanted the most was better roads - - hence Bob Hawke's Bi-centennial roads projects.

Closer to home, the new Youth Offenders policies were first promoted in a basic form, at a CWA State Conference about ten years ago, after members heard a youth worker speak. With repeated submissions over time, the powers that be began to think that they had thought of it all by themselves, and eventually put it into legislation. More recently, the CWA was very active in motivating community opinion on the threatened closure of the Cadell training centre. One member has almost made it her life's work to lobby for the new bridge across the Murray at Berri After 20 years she has seen her hopes about to be realised. I believe she may have an official invitation to the opening, and I hope she gets to drive across that bridge before she dies, as she is now quite elderly.

The CWA is particularly conscious of any issues relating to Health, prepared to respond immediately to any threat to rural services, such as GP's not delivering babies in country areas, or the threatened closure of many country hospitals, which we managed to curtail several years ago, by spirited opposition.

We also have a watching brief for Education, taking a keen interest in Austudy entitlements, RICE, REVISE, Isolated Children and Parents Association, distance education, training by open learning, school bus issues , support for schools in rural areas, etc. When short term contracts were first introduced, members were horrified at what they saw happening both to the young teachers and to the classes, subjected to a lot of instability, and took a submission to the Minister of Education. We were given a good hearing, and while it would be simplistic

of me to say changes were solely due to that representation, we feel sure that we had some influence in improving the conditions for contract teachers in the country, soon after.

This year CWA was invited to respond to the draft policy on Child Safety on Farms, with input to the final document. To recognise National Safety Week from July 21st, many branches are planning to donate Giddy Goanna books to local school libraries, as a gesture to alert children and staff to the need for safety awareness , particularly when visiting farms.

With that background, it conveniently brings me around to incidental education within rural communities by CWA.. During World War II, members were extremely busy with the war effort. You may have heard of them catering for the troop trains travelling north, at Terowie, Hawker and Quorn. The army supplied the pots and pans, but did you realise that the CWA cooked and supplied the ingredients, with the help of primary producers and carriers around the state? Apart from making and packing comfort parcels for servicemen and women overseas, the CWA was the official maker of camouflage nets - something I did not realise until the Australia Remembers celebrations. Anyway after all that was over, the servicemen needed the jobs, and the women went back to their kitchens. New avenues were needed for women's energies.

Once fuel became available, and travel possible, the incidental education of women really began. Cultural pursuits blossomed, with drama groups, choirs, and floral art and handicraft activities becoming popular. Because of the decline in rural population over the last 15 -20 years, many branches no longer have the membership to support drama groups and choirs, but during their hey-day, many women gained valuable skills while participating, by performing in public, and improved their confidence and self esteem in the process - an essential part of education, the basis of further extension and development

The teaching of traditional needlework techniques and handicrafts has continued apace. It has been suggested that CWA has helped to keep many of these skills alive. The Spinners group was active early in the organisation, fifty years ago, about thirty years before homespun once again became popular, and handspinning became a fashionable pastime. Embroidery is now enjoying a huge comeback and CWA has a pool of experienced tutors available to share the skills. Teaching handicrafts has been so successful because of the way CWA used its network to disseminate training. A woman from each district is taught two or three crafts at a central school in Adelaide every year, and then returns to teach members in her own area

during the next twelve months. A new set of crafts is taught the following year. With most towns having a local craft outlet these days, some women have been able to create small businesses for themselves, selling their work.

Outreach Resource teams go to the Pacific Islands or Aboriginal lands, at the invitation of women themselves -expanding women's abilities and horizons. The usual requests are for sewing skills, health (basic hygiene) and cookery.

CWA trains members in conducting a formal meeting, using correct meeting procedure, and maintaining accurate and efficient records, such as simple accounting and accurate minutes.(Trained tutors have been teaching branch treasurers in new systems this year.) For those who are interested, leadership training and tuition in public speaking is available. In two weeks, I will be back here for a president and secretary's school, which I think is booked out, followed by a publicity and reporting workshop. Women have gone into local government and other positions of community responsibility from their background in CWA.

Of course not all women wish to venture out of their comfortable niche, but within meetings, women are encouraged to participate. Even something as simple as a prepared roll call topic can be a challenge to a timid member. Quite recently, I heard of an incident where a woman who had lived a very isolated lifestyle, joined CWA after her husband retired. Her social experience was so limited that the group needed to guide her into participating in a common party game. The obvious change created in her life made me stop and think. How many women's lives have been enriched by their involvement in CWA over the 70 year period? How many new skills have been gained, How many controversial topics discussed or new ideas floated?

I believe we should not underestimate the difference CWA has made within communities, over the years, to many isolated rural women. I know the men joke about fritz for tea the night after the CWA meeting, and I have known some very selfish men who refused to let their wives join the "chinwaggers", but I believe those women, their menfolk and perhaps the community as a whole are the poorer.

Another simple thing we do is study a different country each year as an international project, encouraging members to look further than their own back door. It is good to see women develop, and learn to express their opinions and have confidence within a group. Considering

the limited opportunities many of them had for education and training, until the fifties, CWA was a vehicle which assisted many women to test the new freedom which came with affluence. Although we were too conservative for the Womens Libbers, in our own way we helped women extend themselves. (personal example)When Daylight Saving was introduced, we took a submission to David Tonkin. Living on Eyre Peninsula as a young Mum with small children, I found daylight saving very difficult for them and me, and was asked to prepare material and join the delegation - certainly a learning experience for me.

Another way in which we deliberately try to educate the community, is through annual projects which we call State Objectives. A worthwhile subject is chosen from those nominated around the state, and this becomes the fundraising focus for the year.

Last year the topic was lymphoedema,(gross swelling of the limbs) and the aim was to raise enough money to purchase a perometer, a highly technical but portable piece of medical equipment made in Germany. This enables the doctor to quickly and accurately measure the patient's limbs, and compare with previous records, so enhancing the management of the condition. Many patients have been told to go home and live with it, but recent research indicates that although at present the condition is incurable, it is largely preventable, and can be managed successfully, if patients are educated. While raising nearly $27 000, we also raised community awareness about possible treatment.

On Eyre Peninsula, we took Professor Piller to four conferences, in one week, and after he had spoken to the members at each venue, we arranged for him to speak with local health professionals and lymphoedema patients at various hospitals. The feedback was tremendous, and people can't wait for him to get back with the machine (the first in Australia, by the way)

Other objectives have been cystic fibrosis, before it became as high profile as it is now, patient controlled analgesic devices for major intensive care units, a kidney dialysis machine for Pt Augusta, and the bus for Julia Farr Centre patients. In each case, public awareness of the need has been increased and the information about the particular condition has been distributed.

The State Objective this year is our Dorothy Dolling Memorial Trust Scholarships. This money is available to young women or men who are having financial difficulty continuing or completing their studies, or for mature women who are re-training. This year we had 20 applicants, and were able to award $200 each. Previously the amount has been $300, but the

drop in interest rates has affected this, and we are aiming to raise money to enlarge the capital.

Recently I was in Wadlata Outback centre, and noticed an early model transceiver.(I think it was the original Pt Augusta base set, but don't quote me.) On looking closer, I saw that the engraved plate said it had been donated by the CWA. It quite moved me to think that they were doing it then, as we are doing it now - at the vanguard, caring for both the health and education of people in remote rural areas.

Celebrating Distance Teaching Innovations: The Certificate in Distance Teaching

by
Colin Boylan and Juhani Tuovinen
School of Education
Charles Sturt University-Riverina

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade there has been a growing call by educational administrators, educators and teacher education institutions for pre-service programs to adequately prepare primary and secondary teachers for rural appointments (eg Watson, et al, 1986; Smith-Davis, 1989; Cross and Murphy, 1990; Luft, 1992; Metherell, 1989). As recently as 1995, Herzog and Pittman writing about the preparation of teachers for rural American schools stated that 'pre-service teacher education courses [in the USA] have done little to provide educators with specialised training for work in rural schools' (p.114). In contrast, a number of Australian teacher education institutions have responded to this call by including a subject on teaching in rural schools as part of the curriculum. (eg. King, 1994)

At Charles Sturt University (CSU), the Faculty of Education has maintained a long commitment to preparing teachers for rural appointments. Looking back through past SPERA conference presentations and past issues of the journal **Education in Rural Australia** the following CSU rural education programs have been described:

i) Boylan (1992), Walker and Boylan (1992), Squires, Sinclair and Bell (1991) and Squires and Sinclair (1992) have documented the impact of telematics on small rural central (K-12) schools in New South Wales.
ii) Boylan, Squires and Smith (1994) and Tuovinen and Boylan (1993, 1994) have documented the use of audiographic teleteaching (Telematics) in the pre-service teacher education courses on both the Bathurst and Wagga Wagga campuses of CSU;
iii) Hemmings and Boylan (1992) have demonstrated the positive effects a rural practice teaching experience had on student attitude towards rural teaching and preparedness to seek a rural appointment upon completion of the pre-service course;
iv) Boylan (1996) has described the outcomes on primary students of engaging in a distance education setting pre-service teaching experience in which the students participated in a DEC camp, developed and delivered on air lessons and visited some of the pastoral stations around the Distance Education Centre.
v) Collectively these authors have described and contributed to the teaching of specific primary and secondary pre-service subjects offered at CSU that are designed to prepare these students for a rural appointment.

Essentially, these programs have focussed on three key areas in the pre-service preparation of teachers:

i) the development of appropriate subject content material for inclusion in rural education subjects;
ii) the provision of rural practice teaching experiences for our students; and
iii) a responsiveness to the changing demands facing rural teachers by including new areas on the operation and use of telecommunications technology within our subjects in both the primary and secondary courses.

By contrast an analysis of courses available for in-service teachers revealed little specific support was provided for qualified and practising rural teachers to extend their understandings about rural and distance education topics. At CSU, the Open Learning Institute offers distance education courses designed to upgrade teacher qualifications (3 year to 4 year trained) or to gain a higher qualification, eg Graduate Diploma, Masters degree, or Doctoral degree to both rural and urban teachers. In all of these courses there has been some attention devoted to studies about rural education and very little attention to distance education issues. There are one and a half rural education subjects available at the secondary upgrading bachelor/grad dip level; one rural education subject available at the Masters level, no rural education subject available at the upgrading primary Bachelor degree level and no rural education subject at the Doctoral level. Further there were no specific subjects offered at any level that dealt with issues specific to distance education.

In response to this perceived in-service problem, a specific program of further study was initiated in 1995 for teachers working in a distance education setting. This course is offered by the School of Education on the Wagga Wagga campus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A search of ERIC and the AEI has revealed a paucity of published work on the provision of professional development programs for distance education teachers about distance teaching issues. Given the huge investments by government and private providers of distance education this was surprising. Our searches yielded some published work which is reported here.

Overseas literature

In his discussion on distance learning, Wilson (1996) states that there is a need for programs that equip teachers with insights into distance education delivery strategies. He states" There is a growing realisation that traditional techniques are not as effective in the distance education environment." (p.4) Unfortunately Wilson does not go onto to exploring what should be in such courses. Here the work of Thach and Murphy (1995) does shed some useful light on the nature of professional development courses for distance education teachers. These authors assert that specific focussed professional development programs are needed and that these courses should incorporate many of the ten distance teaching competencies they identified. Their competency list included: i) interpersonal communication; ii) planning skills, iii) collaboration/ teamwork; iv) English proficiency; v) writing skills; vi) organisational skills; vii) feedback skills, viii) knowledge of the distance education field; ix) basic technology knowledge, and x) technology access knowledge.

Cuffman and Macrae (1996) reported from their work that successful professional development for distance education staff occurred when course providers were able to address the specific distance teaching needs identified by the participants. Moffatt (1996) writing about the introduction of a telematics cluster on the South Island of New Zealand concluded that the provision of a focussed professional development program on telematics was essential for the successful implementation and adoption of this form of distance teaching. Further, she recommended that the professional development program must be offered over an extended period of time rather than the 3-4 days of inservice provided to the teachers who trialed the introduction of telematics. Finally, Danaher, Bartlettt and Rowan (1994) provided a cautionary warning to all distance educators when they state that distance education is more than a focus on the technology involved in its delivery. They argue strongly for teacher

professional development programs that empower the distance teacher to develop a critical perspective on the appropriate use of technology in which the learner and the learning process are best served.

Australian Literature

J. V. D'Cruz produced one of the earliest and most thorough evaluation reports of computer/telephone distance education (telematics) technology use in Victoria (D'Cruz, 1990). Five of his twelve recommendations related to the pre-service and/or inservice training needs of teachers. His recommendations included

i) state-wide policy development to provide professional development for distance education;
ii) inservice training for principals in the cost effectiveness analysis of providing alternate learning/teaching structures;
iii) encouragement of inservice training in the use of delivery systems, such as telematics;
iv) organisation of a bi-annual conference for distance education teaching and learning research, evaluation and discussion; and
v) encouragement of pre-service education in a range of distance education delivery systems.

Subsequently general references to the need for both pre-service and in-service teacher and educational administrator professional development in various aspects of distance education technologies and methodologies have been voiced throughout Australia (Hill, Meulenberg, McNamara, Dewildt, 1991; Wright, 1991; Oliver & Reeves, 1994; Gray, 1994; Smith, 1994; OLTC, 1995; Anderton & Nicholson, 1995).

More specifically the professional development and pre-service teacher training for telematics distance delivery of LOTE education has been pursued by Elizabeth Stacey and others (Stacey, 1992; Stacey & Turner, 1993; Stafford & Brown, 1993). In fact, Stafford & Brown argue that 'professional development of the teacher is, perhaps, the most important requirement in the use of technology in the delivery of (LOTE) curriculum (by telematics)' (Stafford & Brown, 1993, p.7).

Elizabeth Stacey has developed an innovative program of involving teacher education students preparing to be primary LOTE teachers to practice their skills with primary students in the distance mode. The implications for teacher preparation from this developmental work (Stacey & Turner, 1993, pp. 8-9) were argued to be

i) Telematics practicum experience needs formal recognition;
ii) Time allowance is required for technology-based distance education practicum organisation;
iii) Special funding is needed for such a program;
iv) Students need to have basic computer skills before participating in such a program;
v) School and teacher contributions must be recognised;
vi) Professional development is needed for the university staff who deliver the program; and
vii) Telematics needs to be used in other curriculum areas.

Michael Forster from Northern Territory took a broader view of the preparatory needs of distance education teachers in his paper to the 1993 SPERA conference (Forster, 1993). He argued for a review of the teacher training to enable a much larger proportion of teachers to participate in open learning than ever before, in fact, arguing that **all** teachers need to be

aware of broad range of open learning options and have personal competence in the field. He also highlighted the professional preparation needs of the facilitators of open learning, the teachers, the parents and the administrators involved in the many aspects of student learning delivered by non-traditional means. At the time of his review, 1993, Forster found only very scarce professional development preparation and support for the participants in the open learning process, and he argued for the provision of professional development in and by flexible and open learning methods for all participants in the educational enterprise. He particularly emphasised the importance of teacher professional development for rural teachers delivered via open/distance learning methods.

In the same conference Peter Sandery and Roy Lundin also commented on the national open learning professional development needs of teachers (Sandery & Lundin, 1993). They described the most urgent teacher professional development needs and argued that the appropriate use of distance education technologies can provide an effective means for providing the desired development. After identifying a number of barriers to open learning by teachers, they suggested educational institutions, such as schools, adopt resource-sharing and negotiated, planned community approaches to professional development based on the principles of 'telecottages' and 'learning organisations'. They argued for a balance between the personal and organisational professional development needs of the learning communities.

Their specific suggestions for each learning community (Sandery & Lundin, 1993, pp. 456-457) are worth repeating in an abbreviated form

i) All staff develop a personal five year professional development plan;
ii) School technology acquisitions need to be compatible with distance education delivery of courses;
iii) The professional development programs be included in total school curriculum planning and resourcing;
iv) All staff be encouraged to participate in professional associations;
v) Outcomes of the professional development are shared with the community;
vii) Staff participate in focus group electronic networks;
viii) Professional reading results are shared in the community;
ix) A professional events calendar is developed and used;
x) School development plans include incentives for staff development; and
xi) Staff need to model appropriate use of technology as learners.

Thus in the Australian literature a broad range of open/distance learning professional development needs and perspectives is canvassed, which may be met by open/distance learning provisions.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

The work of Thach and Murphy (1995) guided the course developers in designing and selecting the content for inclusion in the Certificate. There are two semester long subjects that constitute the Certificate in Distance Teaching course. These subjects are offered each semester and students can enrol in one or both subject(s) per semester. Upon completion of these subjects, students are awarded the Certificate in Distance Teaching testamur and are eligible to gain academic transfer credit into Bachelor and Masters degrees offered by CSU. The subjects in the course are:

i) Pedagogy of Distance Teaching; and
ii) Organisation of Distance Teaching.

Subject overview

The specific content of each subjects is briefly described below.

i) Pedagogy of Distance Teaching.

In this subject the students are asked to consider eight topics. The first topic concerns the range and selection of common distance education technologies. The second topic canvasses modes of communication and how different forms of educational technologies facilitate the educational interactions. The third topic deals with issues related to teaching and learning with distance technologies and the fourth topic is about materials preparation for distance teaching.

The fifth and sixth topics deal with state specific exemplars of distance technology application. The seventh topic looks in depth at examples of teachers' work and telematics technology, and the final topic introduces emerging technologies that may be used in distance education.

The materials include print, CD, video, and computer disk. There is an optional residential school for the participants who are not yet confident enough to use telematics equipment on their own, and support for students is available throughout the subject by electronic mail and phone.

ii) Organisation of Distance Teaching.

This subject consists of two modules. The materials are print based and include a set textbook, Notes written by the authors of the Modules and a set of Readings selected to support the organisation and sequencing of content.

Module 1 provides an introduction to the systems thinking model of organisational management (based on the work of Peter Senge) as well as an overview of current policies and developments in distance education in each state and territory. Module 2 examines the range of management, technological, human resource, student welfare and evaluative issues about teaching in a distance education setting. One of the important features in this subject is that the writers included key people in each state and territory's distance education organisational units.

Specifically the topics covered in this subject include:

a) the systems thinking model;
b) an overview of policies in distance education in Australia;
c) welfare issues;
d) methods of planning, control and implementation of distance education systems;
e) technology and teaching resource management
f) human resource development in distance education; and
g) evaluation in distance reaching.

THE CLIENTELE

The students who have enrolled in this course have come from a diversity of distance education settings. There are students who work in primary and secondary contexts located in Distance Education Centres that are either in rural locations (eg Alice Springs, Dubbo, Kalgoorlie) or in capital city locations (eg Sydney, Hobart, Darwin, Perth). We have had one student participate from British Columbia Canada. A number of students are rural classroom

teachers and teachers in promotion positions within distance education who use distance teaching strategies in their day to day teaching duties in schools. Often these teachers are using telematics as the delivery mode. Their location is diverse - from primary schools through to central schools/area schools/district high schools to secondary colleges/high schools. The only place we have not drawn participants from is the Australian Capital Territory.

More recently (ie Spring of 1997) a small group of our fourth year primary pre-service students have sought approval to enrol in the course specifically to gain this extra qualification to assist them in seeking full-time employment in a NSW Distance Education Centre.

To the end of 1996, there have been 21 students graduate from this course.

CLIENTELE FEEDBACK

As part of any course development, the views of the clientele are essential if the course is to continue. We have sought this evaluative information from the participants which is reported in three parts, namely i) information on the total course including reasons why the course was chosen, what benefits have been gained from the course and suggestion for changes in the course; ii) specific information on the Pedagogy of Distance Teaching subject; and iii) specific information on the Organisation of Distance Teaching subject.

Total course feedback

At the time of enrolment all participants were working in a distance education setting. When asked why they had decided to enrol a variety of reasons emerged which were collated, codified and analysed to produce three inclusive categories. For 3 in 5 participants (60%), they chose this course because they were specifically seeking professional development of their distance teaching skills, for another 30% of participants they were wanting to gain accreditation and the qualification as a recognition for their commitment to distance teaching, and finally, there was a small group (10%) who enrolled for personal improvement/satisfaction reasons.

The main benefits gained from the course were identified and are summarised in rank order of importance below:

i) improved quality in their teaching situation;
ii) better understanding of the issues in teaching in distance education;
iii) improved understanding of the use of technology;
iv) personal satisfaction from studying this course; and
v) employer recognition/accreditation.

Suggestions for change focussed on two areas: i) providing greater opportunity for students to engage in sharing sessions, and ii) specific suggestions on the inclusion technology based systems eg the Internet, Satellite delivery.

In summation the following quotations reflect the students' evaluation of the Certificate in Distance Teaching course:
"Really enjoyed the course. I got a lot out of it" (S2)
"Would recommend [the course] to any teacher wishing to coordinate subjects in an Access [telematics] program" (S5)

"I was appreciative of the flexibility of the lecturers in understanding that sometimes 'work' commitments get in the way of assignments, etc and allowing extra time" (S9)
"I did get a lot from this course and it has helped me write units of work for distance education. I couldn't turn on a computer before this course. Thanks a lot"(S10)

Pedagogy of distance teaching

83 % of course participants who commented on this subject had not experienced any problems with the course materials. The same number of the students found the main text either very useful or somewhat useful. The rest did not find it useful. A number indicated they had used the text ideas outside the course by the end of the subject, e.g. *"Very good & have used it outside my course work."*

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the study guide, with three people pointing out useful improvements to specific aspects of the guide. Two students commented that there were too many readings. (The intention of supplying a comprehensive set of reading resources in this subject was to ensure that all teachers should be provided instructional and exemplar materials applicable to their teaching, allowing them to use the relevant materials and ignore the rest.) Some people suggested changes in emphases with regard to the readings supplied, but most people found the readings beneficial.

The assignments were rated 'very beneficial' or 'satisfactory' by everyone, e.g. *"I found these very useful - creating resources as assignments - very beneficial personally, and for the centre."*

Of the resources provided with the subject the CD ROM with examples of teachers' telematics lessons was rated the most useful, e.g. *"CD ROM - apart from using it for the assignment, it made me reconsider some of what I was presenting to my students."* However, the videotape, Electronic Classroom manual disk, text and other printed materials were also commended by many participants.

On a satisfaction rating scale with five points, ranging from 'very high' to 'total waste of time', the subject was rated 'high' (second highest possible) by 83 % and 'moderate' by the remainder of the respondents.

The suggested improvements to the subject ranged from reducing readings required, providing directions for early start on assignments, providing two subjects on this topic in the course, and a closer focus on primary and secondary school specifics.

Organisation of distance teaching

Students were asked to comment on a variety of aspects of how the subject was organised. They were asked to report on their overall satisfaction with the Organisation of Distance Teaching subject using a 5 point scale (5=Very High through to 1= Very Low). the overall mean was 4.2 with all responses either falling on the 'Very High' (30%) or the 'High' (70%) alternatives.

A number of subject specific items were included that used a five point scale (5=Strongly Agree through to 1=Strongly Disagree) to determine the student's degree of support. The responses are summarised below. The "% 'Agree'" column represents the combined percentages of responses from the 'Strongly Agree' and the 'Agree' categories on the survey.

	Item	Mean	% 'Agree'
i)	the subject aims were clear and concise	4.0	100
ii)	the textbook was useful in this subject	4.0	77
iii)	the assignments were related to the subject's aims	4.2	100
iv)	the Study Guide was well organised	3.9	89
v)	the Readings book was relevant to the subject's content	3.5	63

Suggestions were made on the nature of assignments to ensure that they had a practical basis and that the assignments were very helpful. One student stated *"I'm still using some of the work from the assignments"*(S6). The other area in which suggestions were made dealt with the book of Readings provided. Here some students suggested that the number of readings be reduced yet they also realised that this would be difficult as the audience for the subject is large *"but I realise it was a huge task"*(S8).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

At one level, CSU has been able to identify a specific professional development need for distance education teachers and develop a sustained course of study through the Certificate in Distance Teaching which meets many of these needs. Our challenge is to ensure that as the needs change so does the course offered.

At this point we invite you to list your future professional development needs as a distance education teacher. This will form the basis of a discussion session.

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Literacy Networks in The Community

by
Karen Gardner, Sue Fairley and Henry Condon,
Ravenshoe School

A Parent Perspective .....

In the late 1980's parents were encouraged by the Education Department to "Have Their Say" about parents and community participation. With the introduction of "Focus on Schools" parents and community were further encouraged to become involved in all areas of their child's education including decision making at their local school.

Ravenshoe parents (of which I am one) took up the challenge and became involved in the School Development Plan and various committees that relate to the management of our school. Parents were consulted through neighbourhood meetings.

One of the identified major concerns was literacy and that nearly half of our SPSS funds were used to employ literacy teacher aides to work with teachers and in particular students with identified problems. We were concerned at the number of students with problems especially at Secondary level and although the assistants were helping the students, we believed there had to be a more effective method.

We felt it was imperative to identify problem areas at the primary level and do all we could to ensure students were assisted and supported as early as possible. There were also concerns regarding parents' expectations, attitudes and perceptions regarding literacy and the lack of skills and confidence to assist and support their children. The realisation of the importance of our involvement was the need to acquire knowledge that would enable us to participate effectively.

We allocated funds obtained from DEET, P & C, SPSS and PCAP and employed Geoff Bull and Michelle Anstey (USQ) to assist us to conduct a two stage review. This review involved the whole school community and in 1993 we looked at years 8, 9 and 10 of our secondary department and year 7 of the 3 feeder schools (Mt Garnet, St Teresa's and Ravenshoe Primary).

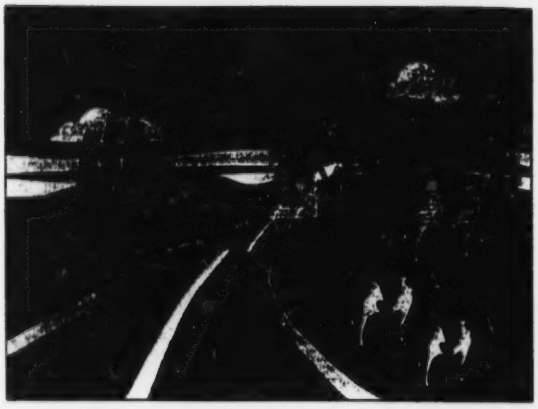
In 1994, preschool to year 7 at all 3 schools were covered. 1995 and 1996 were the implementation years and we are currently working on our action plan.

The community co-operated wonderfully through informal meetings and questionnaires. We also organised for 50 families from varying backgrounds to be interviewed to particularly look at their perceptions, attitudes and expectations. Teachers were observed in classes and interviewed and then work programs and teaching environments evaluated. Recommendations were made as a result of this.

My involvement as a parent at the school level has further involved me with education at both Regional and State levels of the QCPCA and the Education Department. I am more convinced than ever that parents can make a difference by their participation. My awareness and knowledge has increased significantly, I have learnt to appreciate and tolerate different points of views, circumstances and the varying abilities of others and now am able to look at things from different perspectives. I understand how important my support is, and the support of parents in general, to ensure the best education for our children.

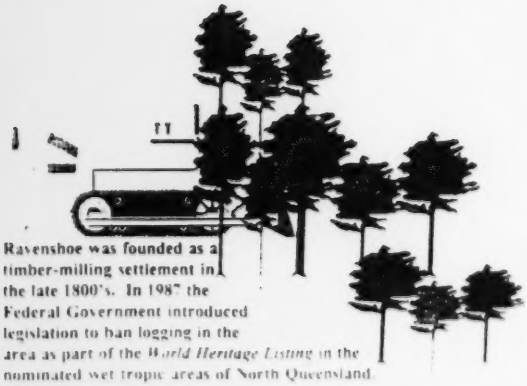
Successful parent participation ensures continuity within school communities. It is vital that parent skilling is provided to assist parents to be actively involved, from providing support at home to participating at a decision making level.

There is a need to work as a team especially to improve the home/school link and to enable schools to respond to their local needs. Interestingly, the more you become involved the more you realise how parents and community members can contribute, not only to the school but also other related community development areas. I believe our involvement is not only a right but an important responsibility. Together we can assist our children to reach their potential.



Tourism is emerging as a significant industry

The shire has a population of approximately 5000 while approximately 1200 people live in the town.



Ravenshoe was founded as a timber-milling settlement in the late 1800's. In 198" the Federal Government introduced legislation to ban logging in the area as part of the *World Heritage Listing* in the nominated wet tropic areas of North Queensland.

"This listing has had significant negative impacts on the social and economic life of the town, more negative than any other community affected by the Listing". (Blosse, Turrell andWestern 1991: "0-73).

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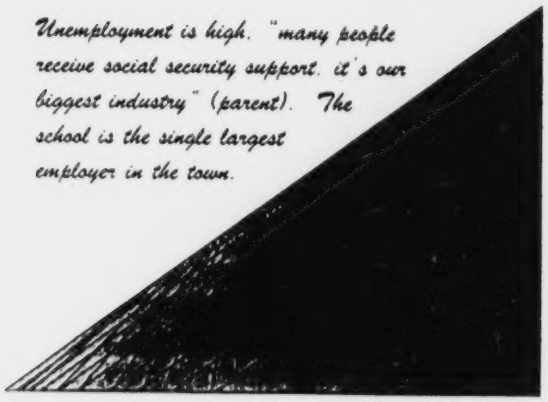
Unemployment is high. "many people receive social security support. it's our biggest industry" (parent). The school is the single largest employer in the town.

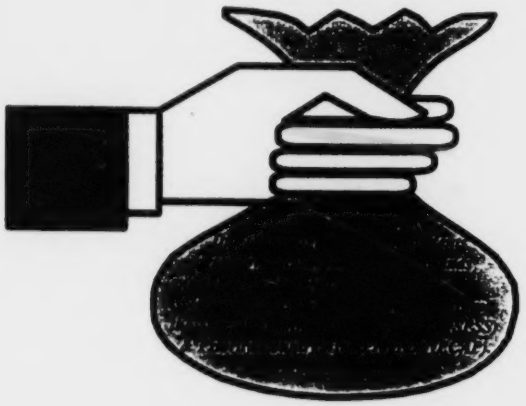


There is a large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

An increasing number of families are moving into the Ravenshoe area attracted by low cost acreages.

These were identified during a community meeting held in 1995

- *Low literacy levels of many adults*
- *Rapid population growth not shown in census*
- *High levels of domestic violence*
- *Drug abuse*
- *Alcohol abuse*
- *Behaviour problems*
- *Inadequate appropriate recreational facilities and activities*
- *Lack of employment options and opportunities in and around the town*
- *Lack of access to support agencies*



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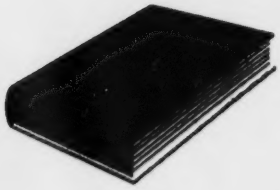
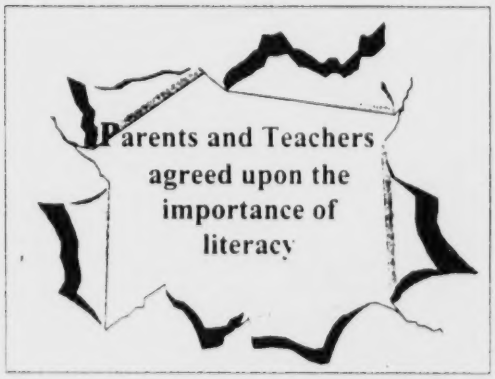
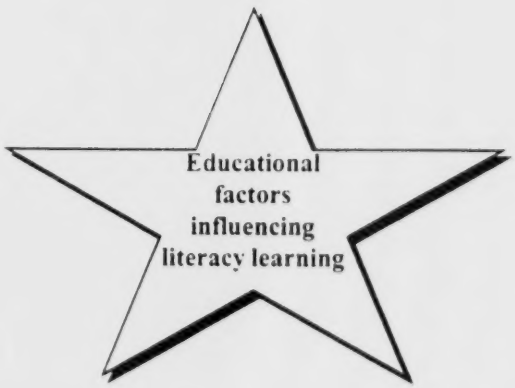
THE LITERACY PRACTICES IN THREE SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES



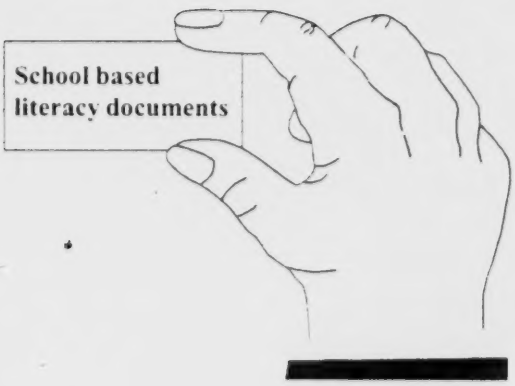
Attitudes and expectations about literacy and literacy learning held by students



Parents and Teachers agreed upon the importance of literacy

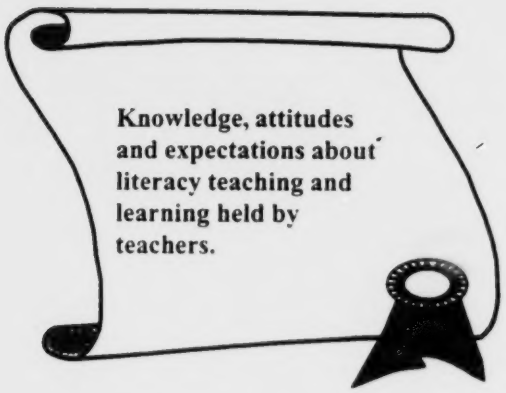


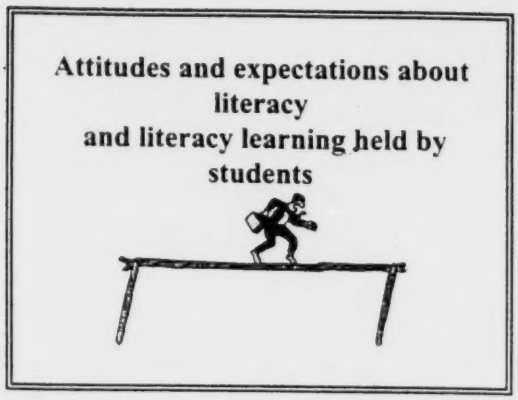
Educational factors influencing literacy learning

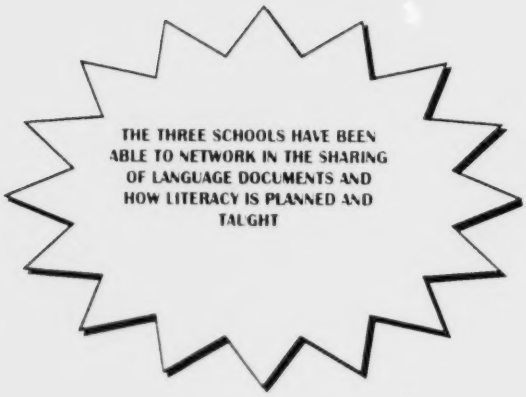


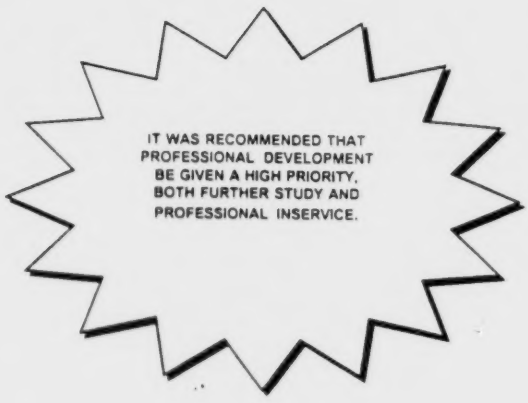
School based literacy documents

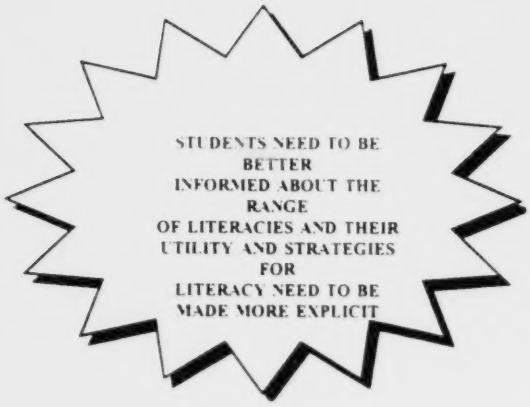
Professional teaching background and experience of the teachers

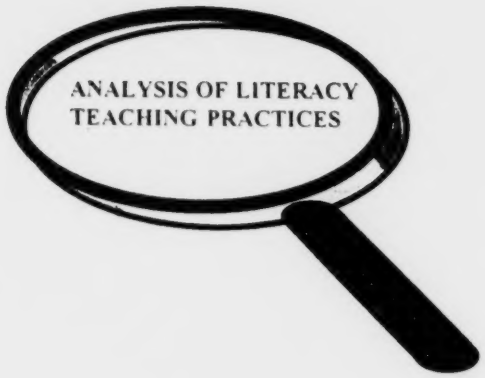

Knowledge, attitudes and expectations about literacy teaching and learning held by teachers.

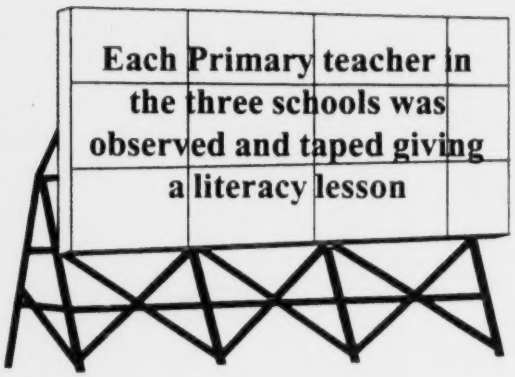

Attitudes and expectations about literacy and literacy learning held by students

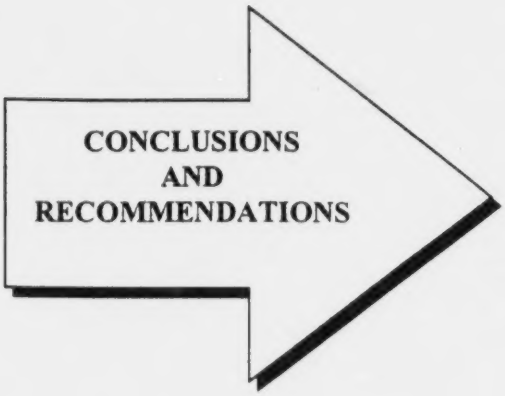

THE THREE SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO NETWORK IN THE SHARING OF LANGUAGE DOCUMENTS AND HOW LITERACY IS PLANNED AND TAUGHT

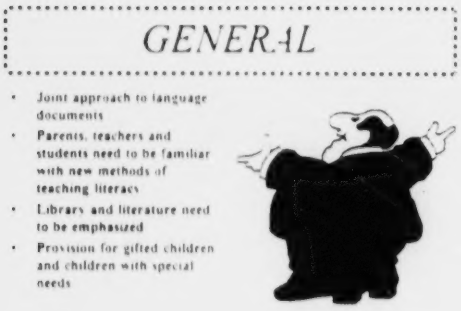

IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY, BOTH FURTHER STUDY AND PROFESSIONAL INSERVICE.

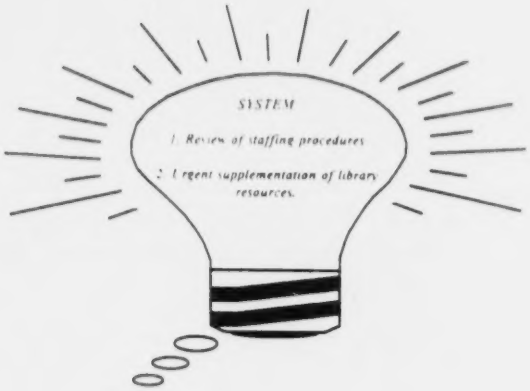

STUDENTS NEED TO BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THE RANGE OF LITERACIES AND THEIR UTILITY AND STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY NEED TO BE MADE MORE EXPLICIT

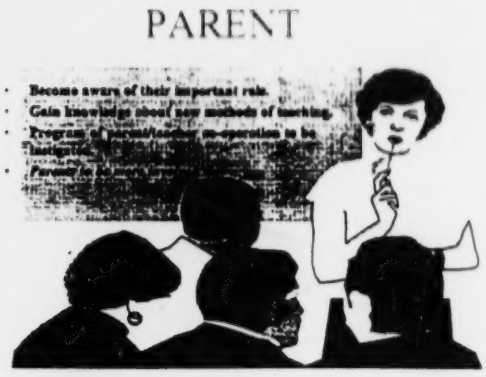

ANALYSIS OF LITERACY TEACHING PRACTICES

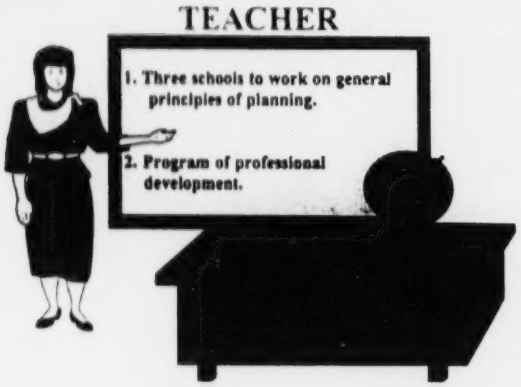





GENERAL
Joint approach to language documents
Parents, teachers and students need to be familiar with new methods of teaching literacy
Library and literature need to be emphasized
Provision for gifted children and children with special needs







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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL

1. Needs to be a joint approach to English documents among the three schools.
2. All parties need to be familiar with new methods in literacy teaching - parents, teachers and students.
3. The library and literature need to be an important feature of English teaching and learning.
4. Gifted children and children with special needs should be provided for within the school communities.

SYSTEM

1. Review of staffing procedures.
2. All three schools need urgent supplementation in the library.

PARENT

1. Parents need to become aware of the very important role they can play.
2. Parents need to gain knowledge about new methods of teaching literacy.
3. A program of parent and teacher co-operation needs to be instigated.
4. Parent involvement.

TEACHER

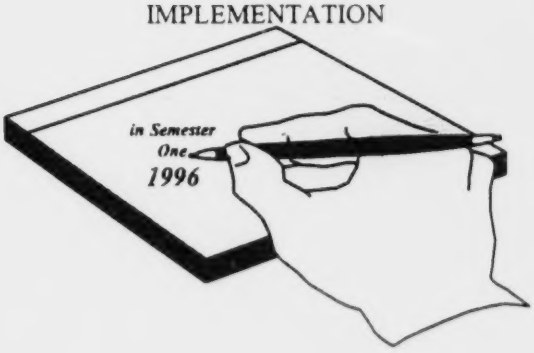
1. The staff of the three schools need to agree on some general principles of planning, especially at the mid and long term planning level.
2. A program of professional development needs to be made available which includes some of the following areas:
   * Language Across the Curriculum.
   * Contemporary approaches to literacy learning, particularly critical literacy and its relationship to the use of genre.
   * Literacy as a social process, particularly involving talk and action research.
   * Planning for Literacy Learning.
   * Strategies for learning and assessment.

The professional development program proposed needs to be on site and long term.
There were also recommendations specific to each school community.

FUTURE

* Continue to expand our networking.
* Common resources between the three schools.
* Common language document.

STAGE 3
IMPLEMENTATION



FOCUS

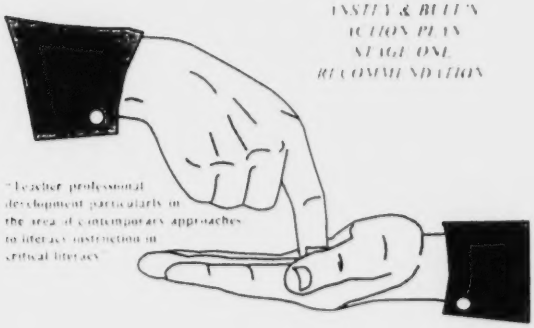
IMPROVE LITERACY IN THE RAVENSHOE CLUSTER

St Teresa's

Mt Garnet State School

Ravenshoe State School P-12

HOW?


INSTEP & BELTN
ACTION PLAN
STAGE ONE
RECOMMENDATION
"Teacher professional development particularly in the area of contemporary approaches to literacy instruction in critical literacy"

OUR LITERACY TEAM EXPANDED THIS TO:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR:

- Teachers
- Parents
- Members of our 3 school communities

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

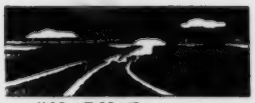
COMPRISED OF:

- **Cluster Networking- commenced and ongoing**
- **Literacy Inservice- workshops completed**
- **Support-a-reader training for parents completed**
- **Literacy made easy for parents completed**

CLUSTER NETWORKING between:

lower primary teachers	upper primary teachers

with meetings twice a term in alternating communities.



SHARING:

- *knowledge and experiences*
- *resources, unit ideas- WHAT WORKS!*
- *effective teaching strategies*
- *methods of planning*

LITERACY INSERVICE

FOR PARENTS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS-
from State and Catholic systems

Ravenshoe Cluster, schools and communities

Georgetown Cluster, schools

Professional Development Project No 2

Whole language approach to planning — **Vera Zappala- Good Counsel Primary School**

Thinking Skills based literacy planning — **Margaret Bramham- St Josephs Primary School**

Developing quality school English programs — **Teresa Raciti and Sandra Cameron Tableland School Support Centre**

THINKING SKILLS AND BASIC FRIENDLY GRAMMAR AND CREATIVE WRITING AND LITERACY UPDATE FOR PARENTS

Geoff Bishop, St Augustine's School

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM LITERACY STRATEGIES

Nikki Dredge and Dot Walker
READ School Support Centre

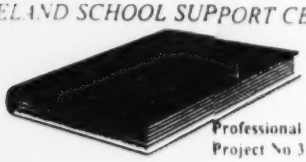
LITERACY INTERVENTION AND LANGUAGE CONTINUA
Christine Fahey
Tableland School Support Centre

INTRODUCING FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR
Wendy Morgan
Q.U.T.

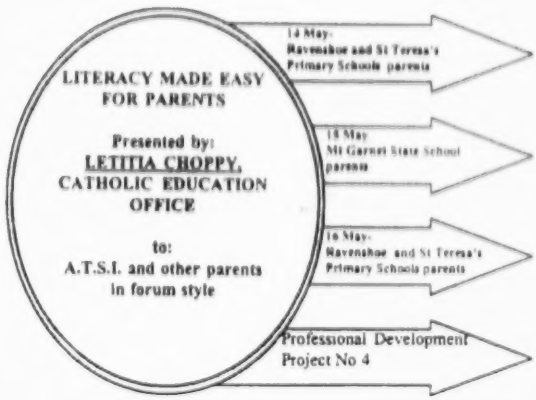
SUPPORT-A-READER

OFFERED TO PARENTS AND PRESENTED BY:

CHRISTINE FAHEY
TABLELAND SCHOOL SUPPORT CENTRE



Professional Development Project No 3



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LETITIA CHOPPY addressed issues from parents:

CURRENT TEACHING METHODS:

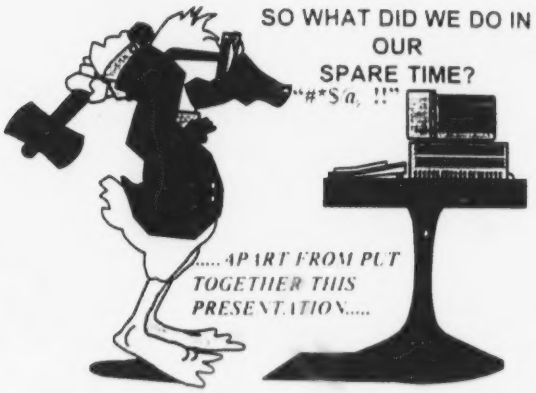
"What are our kids being taught as 'literacy'?"
"How do we teach kids to read?"

THE PARENT'S ROLE:

"How can I help in the classroom and at home?"
"When my child has trouble spelling/writing/reading, how can I help?"

THE VALUE OF LITERACY SKILLS:

"Why is literacy so important to my child?"



RECOMMENDATION 1.11 FOR RAVENSHOE STATE SCHOOL P-12

"Gifted and talented students need to be catered for in the school"

SO

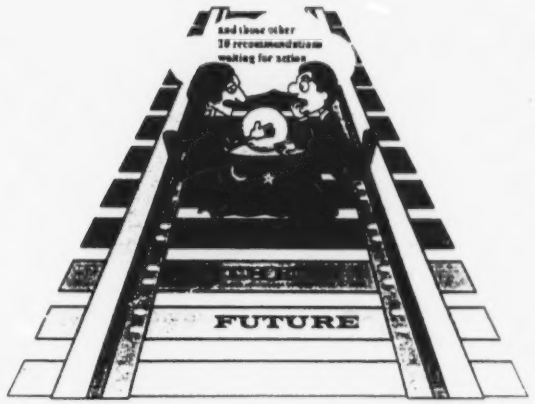
we sought PCAP funding to support

TOURNAMENT OF THE MINDS

and a

THINKFEST

(Henry will reveal this little gem in the next section)



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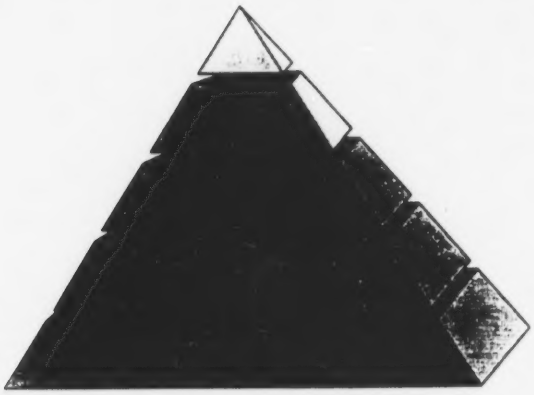
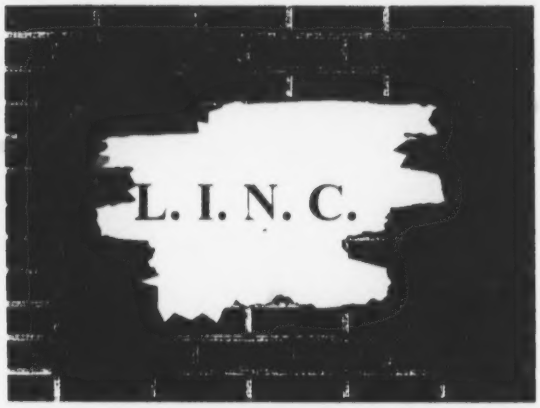
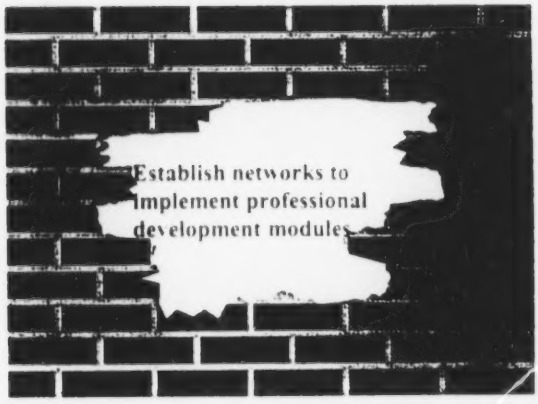
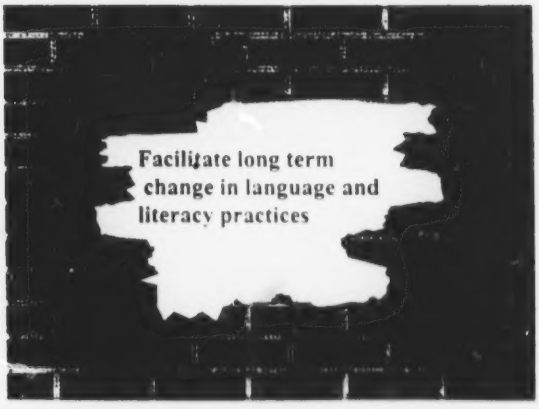


Development of common resources and a common language document







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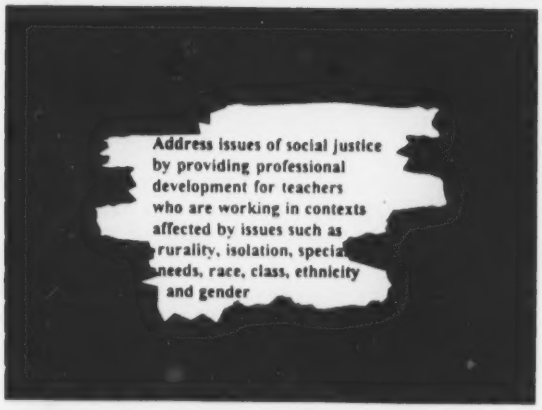
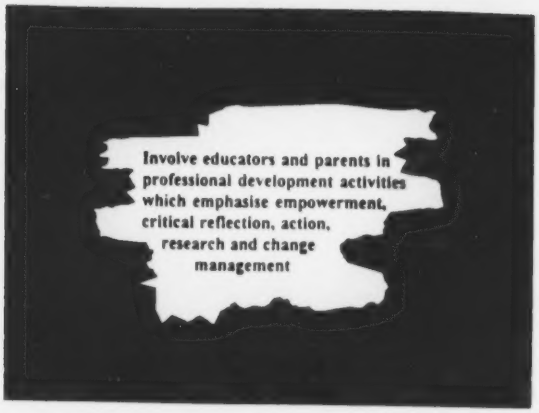
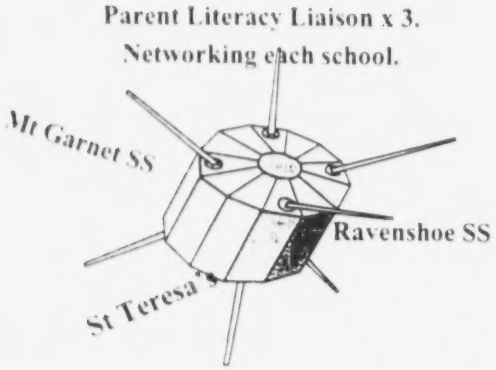

Address issues of social justice by providing professional development for teachers who are working in contexts affected by issues such as rurality, isolation, special needs, race, class, ethnicity and gender


Involve educators and parents in professional development activities which emphasise empowerment, critical reflection, action, research and change management

Year 7 pupils of Ravenshoe cluster and pupils from the Georgetown cluster met for two days to focus on thinking skills and literacy development.
THINKFEST



The project involves the employment of a part-time parent liaison officer. The role will provide a contact for parents and the job will include the organisation of formal professional development opportunities and informal parent literacy networks.

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OBJECTIVES

- Inclusive literacy practices
- Supportive home environment
- Student participation and use of literacy resources
- Increased standards of literacy

OBJECTIVES

- Professional development opportunities for parents
- Bridge between parents and their schools
- Common understanding of literacy networks

THE FUTURE

RAVENSHOE CLUSTER LITERACY PROJECT

SYDNEY 2000.....

LITERACY NETWORKS IN THE COMMUNITY

CONTACTS:

			Phone	Fax
Henry Condon	Ravenshoe State School P-12	Primary Co-ordinator	070 976224	976317
Sue Fairley	Ravenshoe State School P-12	Parent	070 972357	972357
Karen Gardner	Ravenshoe State School P-12	Sec Deputy Principal	070 976499	976107

REFERENCES:

Anstey & Bull 1994 "A Study of Literacy Attitudes and Practices in the Ravenshoe State School and Community." Language and Literacy Research Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

Anstey & Bull 1995 "The Literacy Practices in Three Primary Schools and their Communities." Language and Literacy Research Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

PCAP Priority Country Area Program for significant funding at all stages including current implementation.

SPSS Special Programs Schools Scheme for significant project funding especially in Stage Two.

Our Communities Who continue to build worthwhile partnerships, are hungry to understand the learner and passionate about the need for supportive and challenging environment.

Sue Fairley A parent with vision who planted a seed that grows and blossoms with the support of many other parents, students and teachers.

LITERACY NETWORKS IN THE COMMUNITY

a joint project between
MT GARNET STATE SCHOOL, ST TERESA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND
RAVENSHOE STATE SCHOOL P - 12

LINKS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING & TEACHING

Understanding the learner:

- Identifying features of the learner's past and present experiences, and respecting the influence of these features on the learner's personal development
- Recognising factors that place the learner within lower relationships in the learning context as well as in society.
- Recognising and addressing the expectations and aspirations of the learner
- Recognising the impact of others' expectations on the learner.

Active construction of meaning:

- Participate in a variety of formal and informal social and cultural interactions
- reflect critically on their own and others' knowledge, actions and assumptions, including those relating to gender, race and class
- Explore practical and purposeful texts.

Supportive and challenging environment:

- Parents, caregivers and other community members supporting the learning-teaching process as partners or skilled participants
- Diverse, yet relevant, experiences that use the school and wider community as contexts for learning
- Co-operative planning, implementation and evaluation of programs for continuity of learning.

Worthwhile partnerships:

- School administrators, parents, caregivers, paraprofessionals, specialist, support teachers and other members of the community participate in the learning-teaching process
- Teachers are active learners, and learners have the opportunity to teach others
- Learners and teachers communicate their expectations and achievements.

Social and cultural contexts:

- All groups of learners achieve success based on realistic and challenging expectations
- Individual diversity as well as the perspectives, contributions and experiences of diverse social and cultural groups is included and valued.

A picture postcard perspective of rural communities

by
Mrs Sheila King
Co-ordinator of Field Experience at the University of Southern Queensland
President of SPERA

Recently I had the opportunity to spend some time in rural communities in Canada, America and Britain. The intention of the workshop is to share snippets of these experiences of rural schools, rural communities and rural educators. The session will introduce participants to schools, regional institutions and community education opportunities in various rural and isolated settings. There will be opportunity to compare, contrast and celebrate.

I commenced my trip in British Columbia, Canada where I spent some time at the University of Victoria working with people involved in teacher education programs for preservice teachers. It was a great opportunity to compare and contrast the practicum programs available to the students, including an internship program.

I visited a number of local schools participating in the practicum programs offered by University of Victoria and met with students, teachers and supervisors. I spent considerable time at Bayside Middle School which is a new school catering for year 7,8 and 9 students. The transition from year 7 through to 9 involves home classes as well as specialist sessions utilising laboratories and workshops.

Bayside Middle school works closely with Lauwelnew tribal school where the school is staffed by tribal teachers and lessons are conducted in the native language. When students are ready to integrate in the public system they move on to Bayside, but return to Lauwelnew for appropriate periods of time if necessary.

I also visited Malaspino University College at Nanaimo a regional university with an obvious rural perspective. Education students are encouraged to complete practicum in rural settings and course requirements are geared to suit these needs. The University College is currently developing a unit which has relevance to all faculties who provide workers for rural communities. The unit will focus on various rural issues and how to address them as a professional in the community. It will have relevance for health workers, doctors, teachers, childcare providers, police, lawyers etc.

From British Columbia I flew to Alberta and worked for a number of days at the University of Lethbridge. I was interested in the undergraduate teachers course of four years with an option for an additional period as an internship. Local schools volunteer to participate in the internship program and they negotiate the preferred program with the student and the

university. One student with an expertise in computing negotiated a one third teaching load, a one third inservice load where he trained the school staff and the other third was used as technology support across the whole school, including administration.

I also visited a number of schools including K-12 schools such as Noble Central where the primary school is in multigrades and the Principal and Deputy Principal have a 60% teaching load. Another school was the purpose built Jenny Emory Elementary school catering for K-7. This school had various centres which were utilised by the majority of students and staff.

I then caught a bus and headed south across the border to Montana, travelling across great open plains in a major grain growing area. I arrived in the capital, Helena, in time to attend a teachers conference. Montana state closes all the schools for two days to allow teachers to attend in- service and so there were 4,000 teachers at the conference! This was certainly Professional development on a grand scale. Various professional associations combine to provide a large and varied program which kept all participants occupied over the two and a half days. Many teachers were completing sessions for registration renewal which is a requirement for teachers in Montana.

I visited Monatana State University at Bozeman and had the opportunity to work with final year students preparing for their final practicum. These students had opted to complete an international practicum and were going to New Zealand, the UK or Germany. This was an exciting development for the students and demonstrated a variety of partnerships the university had developed.

I visited Spring Hill one teacher school at the foot of the mountains. It had snowed over the weekend and some of the children arrived on toboggans. This is a fifth generation school with eleven pupils. The school has one full time teacher and a half time teacher. I also visited Monforton school which is a K-9 school. The lower grades operate on a traditional home class system but years 7, 8 and 9 take various specialist classes as well as home class sessions. The school also operates a gifted program where students are withdrawn from their usual class setting to work in multiage settings on various programs.

My next stop was Portland, Oregon where I spent sometime with the staff at the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. This centre bridges the gap between theory and practice, research and action, universities and schools. The centre supports schools in writing submissions and seeking funding, lobbying for policy change, particularly for rural schools; advancing technology and integrating it into curriculum; community development. The centre very much has a rural perspective with 900 school districts in its catchment area.

I also visited Portland University and a number of schools involved in practicum programs for students. Many of these provided the opportunity for multiage teaching as well as small school placement to support students looking for rural experiences.
My final stop in America was the state of Kansas, where I visited the Crawford school district. The Superintendent of the region demonstrated the bus system and late in the afternoon I was able to see it in action. Most students in the area have to travel for some time in their education and most of the small schools have closed down and the children travel to larger schools. The buses provide an additional income for many local farmers but mean that some students have long distances to travel and spend many hours of the week on a bus!

I also saw the Crawford district school library bus which takes resources and a teacher librarian around the district to the elementary schools. This supplements their library resources and is online to the library at Chapman Junior High. Once again technology clearly plays a significant role in the education system, where it is fully integrated.

Finally I would like to share a little of my visit to the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. Here I spent some time at Lews Castle College where teaching remote and isolated students plays a significant role in the life of the educators. I heard about the development of the University of the Highlands and Islands which will offer courses, utilise resources and staff from a variety of centres but not have a physical campus presence anywhere. The offering of a rural development program is a positive start for this exciting project.

As the island is Gaelic speaking most of the schools offer English as a second language. The island has a thriving publishing company which publishes in the Gaelic medium, a vital cultural link. The school support centre also develops and provides resource materials in Gaelic. Students completing teaching courses in Scotland are encouraged to complete a practicum in one of the Island schools if they are fluent Gaelic. There are many small schools on the island which are slowly falling in to disrepair and the authorities are closing them down. These schools are not replaced and the children then have to travel further or board in the larger communities. As the makeup of communities change the demand for services change and once a school is closed it becomes very difficult for the community to have it reopened, a challenge which faces many of three crofters on the Isle of Lewis.

My visits to so many schools, colleges and universities certainly provided me an opportunity to reflect, improve and move on. The rural communities I visited are facing the same trials and tribulations that occur here in rural Australia. The innovative practices that are occuring in order to ensure rural students a quality education are something we can truly celebrate here in Australia.

Research in Families
Bachelor of Social Science (Children Studies)
Edith Cowan University
Semester One

Identification of Barriers that confront rural Students entering the University system

by
Jennifer Roe

ABSTRACT

The rural life is a wonderful life for many: with open spaces, often small, close knit communities and reduced hustle and bustle due to smaller populations. But in conjunction with these smaller populations comes the limited provisions of goods and services. Services that provide both life and employment enhancing opportunities to their consumer. Universities are such services. It is because of this lack of provisional tertiary education in rural regions, that the majority of rural youths must leave their homes, families and thus support networks. University can be an exciting time where new friends, knowledge and contacts are made. However for these rural students who have made the transition to university, it is not only the university life that they must now adjust to, rather there are many consequential and therefore additional

BARRIERS THAT CONFRONT RURAL STUDENTS ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural youth of Australia are a minority group. In 1986 they accommodated only 26% of Western Australia's total youth population. Being a minority group they relieve limited provision of services and therefore limited access to life improving resources. Because of these limited resources many rural youth must make the transition from their rural environment to an often very different city lifestyle, where the necessary services are offered. Such a transition must occur for most West Australian rural youth/students if they wish to undertake tertiary education in this state and hence improve their life opportunities.

For the purpose of this research I have adopted Barker's and Milligan's (1990) broad definition of rural. That is any 'provincial centre of significant size as well as smaller country towns and communities'. Places such as Albany, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury along with all other country towns will therefore be included within this definition. In addition I will also include the often separately classified remote regions.

As identified above a transition must occur for most rural students who wish to undertake tertiary studies. Their reason as also identified above are purely the lack of life improving opportunities within rural areas. It is the provision of these life improving opportunities, or the lack of, that dominate the majority of documented information with reference to rural youth.
It must not be mistaken however, that all information documented or not, is of uttermost importance and essential if change in rural area is to occur. But it isn't going to be an overnight occurrence and thus rural students must still make the move away from their rural environment for tertiary education. By doing so they must also leave their social, emotional

and financial support, whether it be family or friends, behind. They do not have to cope only with the new ordeal of university life, but they must also cope now with accessing new resources in a new environment as an independent away from their support network.

Documented information on the issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary studies in metropolitan areas is sparse and if accessible usually combined with the provision of services to rural areas, and therefore brief. This is the case with Baker and Milligan (1990) who have identified many issues experienced by rural youth, yet as their report title suggests, their main focus in on "Improving Services for rural Young People: Strategies for change". They have however referenced other authors who have made comment on the issues facing young rural people. Breen (1987) and Hartley (1989) were two such authors yet they weren't accessible.

Boylan's (1991) "Coming in from the Country" report on Charles Sturt University - Riveranna, acknowledges that university life does include a lot of other factors for rural students. This perhaps giving reason to the fact that 'rural students historically and currently have lower retention rates in both secondary and tertiary education'. Charles Sturt University appointed a Rural Student Liaison Officer with this is mind.

Although not the same specification, the University of Western Australia also offers a programme to assist with the transition. The Transition Support Programme is available and offered to all UWA students yet rural students are a particular focus group. The existence of this programme was brought to my attention through word of mouth. I found this, word of mouth, to be the primary source of information about issues facing rural students undertaking in tertiary education in Perth. After making telephone and then personal contact with Greg Price of the Western Australian rural Youth Federation Inc. he brought to my attention the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia where I spoke at length with Julie Islop. It was at YACWA that I gained a large percentage of information on rural youth by means of speaking with Julie and accessing their library.

It became apparent to me through this snowball effect of personal communication that much of the knowledge and therefore information related to this topic can only be obtained via the rural students themselves who have first hand experience. Interpretation and analysis of such experiences can then be made and the issues identified.

In conjunction with this belief and the lack of already documented information on this topic I believe there is a necessity for research into this field to be conducted. Through means of this research paper I will endeavour to fill or at least lessen the gap.

RESEARCH QUESTION

ISSUES FACING RURAL STUDENTS UNDERTAKING TERTIARY EDUCATION IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

RESEARCH PARAGDIGM

"In simple terms, a paradigm is a set of propositions that explain how the word is perceived' (Sarantakos, 1993). This research paper reflects one of the major paradigms - The Interpretive. Reflection of such occurs throughout this research with particular reference to the questionnaire, what and how the questions asked, as well as interpretations of all gathered information. Interpretation is a key component of the interpretive paradigm and therefore becomes a key component of this research. Interpretation of the subjects personal experiences as they better understand the issues facing rural students. Although not entirely, Qualitative research also reflects many of this paradigms assumptions. It is this form of research methodology that is primarily employed for the purpose of this research. As its name suggests research of this type places emphasis on the quality and meaning of the experience

rather than its quantity. It also 'perceives the researcher and researched (the subjects) that are the vital source of information, required by this research. The research rather is the one obtaining interpreting and analysing their experiences and therefore knowledge of the topic at hand.

SUBJECTS

The prerequisites required to be chosen as a voluntary participant in this research were; to be either male or female currently studying at any of Western Australia's universities, but who is from their rural environment (rural as defined in the literature review) and therefore was required to move to Perth to undertake in tertiary studies. The rural students form(s) of accommodation were also considered so as to gather a broad range of personal experiences.

Questionnaires were mailed to a total of 20 rural students, 10 to female rural students and 10 to male rural students. Of the total 20 questionnaires mailed out, 16 were returned either fully or partly completed.

MATERIALS

Questionnaire
See appendix (ii)

PROCEDURE

As identified above under the heading of subjects, questionnaires were sent to 20 rural tertiary students. If any problems on the subjects behalf arose, I will have had included my contact number and thus allowing them to quickly clear any of their concerns up with me. I also provided a self addressed and stamped envelope to each subject, so as after completion of the questionnaire they could promptly return it to me by Friday 11th April, 1997, allowing analysis to begin.

ANALYSIS

Completed and returned questionnaires allowed me to interpret and gather further information on and then identify the issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary education in Perth. With identification of these issues I will further discuss and describe each particular one with reference to additional literature and any relevant questions as asked in the questionnaire. Possible implications resulting in the identification of the issues will also be identified and discussed. All results and discussions of this research comprise a large percentage of the final research report.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Confidentiality is of uttermost importance when conducting research. Confidentiality of the participant's name, personal details and raw data supplied to the researcher for such a purpose. By providing a consent form, which the voluntary participant is required to sign, clearly identifies their part in the research as well as your obligation to keep all information data to yourself and if necessary your research supervisor. This is achieved by means of ensuring only yourself and your research supervisor have access to the date through a password to which raw data many be obtained via a computer. On completion of the research all relevant raw data will be disposed of by shredding it.

RESULTS

It was the purpose of this research to identify the issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary education in Perth, Western Australia. Of the 20 questionnaires mailed to voluntary participant, 17 were returned either fully or partly completed, and it is from this source that all results (issues facing rural students) have been derived.

It is the belief of participants in this research that they are disadvantaged when attending university in Perth because of their rural status and consequently the additional issues that face them. Whether emotional, social and/or financial these issues are believed to make it harder to cope with and succeed at university. Emotional, social and financial headings will be used below so as to clearly identify the issues that do face rural students who are undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, W.A. Although divided under headings many of the issues are relevant to more than one and all related to and influence one another.

EMOTIONAL

For all participants in this research there was no choice in moving away from home if they were to improve their life opportunities by means of tertiary education and hence a university degree. For most the initial move to Perth was not traumatic. Of the 16 participants, 13 had been living at home before their move and of those, 4 found it difficult to leave. One participant had been living away from home in a country hostel situation yet still found it difficult to leave her home and family once again. An emotional strength for each participant was that they all had family and/or friends that provided them with support. All participants also stated that their form of accommodation was of advantage to them. One particular form of accommodation - a residential college, was identified to provide great emotional support to all that live there. All residents are rural students and thus experiencing similar difficulties to one another. The support and help offered to deal with any difficulties often substituted what would otherwise be provided by parents, siblings, other family members and/or friends in the student's home environment.

This support from mum, dad and/or another source from the home environment was missed by the majority of all participants at times when difficulties arose. Such problems included sickness, a death, when the student was angry and/or annoyed, times of family celebrations that he/she missed out on because of distance or study commitments, university difficulties, exams, loneliness, personal reasons and/or money reasons. In addition to these times, some students also found it hard to settle into their new lifestyle and missed their families once a week, once a month or even once a day.

For many, the presence of friends, made at school and/or in the home environment, who were also in Perth were not of importance to them. Someone to talk freely to, a familiar face and hopefully someone who knows about other relevant resources. However, it wasn't long before a large percentage of the students stated that they easily established new friendships. New friendships were of great help as they gave many new rural tertiary students confidence, which flowed into all domains of their lives and added enjoyment and opportunities into their new lifestyles.

Without these friendships and/or any of the other support forms, the transition from home to Perth would have been very difficult emotionally, and thus it becomes obvious that although these rural students have come to Perth so as to attend university they are faced with a lot more deal with (ie coping with difficulties by themselves away from family support) other than only university. With respect to university life however 3 rural students were overwhelmed by the size of their university, and 11 of the 16 felt comfortable with the number of other students in their lectures. The majority had spoken informally to their lecturers, yet 9 remained unknown to the fact that support groups existed for their use on campus if needed.

Of the 8 Edith Cowan University participants, 5 believed that support groups existed, but 2 of which believed them to be only offering academic support, the remaining 3 believed no groups existed for their use. These figures compared with 4 University of Western Australia students

knowing of existing support groups, leaving only 1 student who didn't and 2 Curtin participants who did, with again 1 who didn't.

But when they first started university 9 out 16 participants did not have any knowledge of these groups. This issue of support groups is later discussed to further detail, under the 'discussion' heading.

Because of the emotional pressures placed on rural students, 5 of the participants acknowledged that they had given serious thought to taking time off university and with an additional 3 identifying that it would be nice, yet isn't a realistic approach for them. All would repeat the move away from home to Perth so to attend university, bar 1 who would defer for a year, yet only because they have no choice in the matter if they are to improve their life opportunities.

SOCIAL

Socially the transition made from home to Peth provided an exciting time in most of the participants lives. The need for independence from parents, the chance of meeting new people of similar ages, broadening minds to what life hast to offer and the general social life of Perth were all believed to be positives in moving to Perth. As identified in the previous heading the majority of participants didn't find the initial move from home difficult to make. And once again yet this with reference to the social domain of the participant's lives, a large percentage found their accommodation to be an advantage to them. Renting a property with others allowed for the independence, meeting new people and the general social life. Though it was perhaps the residential colleges that allowed for the greatest social aspect in their new lives. Living with up to 160 other rural tertiary students all of similar age to one another, it becomes no wonder. Accommodation partners were the largest representative of new friends made, the second being university colleges (9 participants), followed closely by the additional social groups (7). New friendships were easily established according to 12 of the participants and because of this made their time in Peth and therefore at university more enjoyable. However although the majority stated that it was easy to establish new friendships there are a remaining 4 who didn't agree and an additional 3 that found neither easy or hard. For those 5 who did find it difficult, the time whilst establishing the friendships was difficult and added to the already existing pressures of moving away from home. Missing their families was more common for these participants, as limited friends meant there weren't as many people to share both good and bad experiences with and therefore could have been very lonely. Those who found it difficult to establish new friends also experienced anxiety, homesickness, university difficulties and found it hard to deal with new everyday experiences in their lifestyles.

Of these problems many are emotions and thus the inter-relation between domains in these participants new lives.

The knowledge of support groups available to them at their university is another example which affects participants dealings with university and associated difficulties. The existence and knowledge of support groups for rural students enables ways in which the students, especially those who are finding it difficult to establish new friends and socialise with one another. From the total of 16 participants 9 had no knowledge now, that such support groups may exist at their universities, let alone now when they first began.

FINANCIAL

The financial domain in the rural students lives is yet another area that although not directly, a rural support group could provide support for. It is this domain of their new lives, the financial, that all research participants have identified to cause the most difficulties. All on a scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, strongly agreed that it

costs them and/or their families more as rural students to attend university than it would for a city student. One participant had a conversation with university two friends who approximated it cost them and/or their families 1. $2,000 to live at home or 2. $6,000 when travelling from Mundaring for university. The participant themselves estimated that for themselves to attend university it would cost them and/or their family $10,000 plus, simply because the consequences of being a rural student and hence having to live away from home.

When moving away from home, rural students leave behind the basic yet essential appliances, as well as the financial convenience of everyday household supplies being available to use and even the convenience of having food provided. If setting up a house is required due to rental essentials such as table, chairs, fridge, washing machine, toaster, etc all of which are taken for granted in a home situation - must be purchased usually by means of financial purchase.

The participants who are not in this accommodation situation have still identified that rent is required for staying at a residential college (approximately $175) or private boarding. Of the 16 rural students participating in this research questionnaire, only 2 receive financial assistance from the government by means of Outside. This resulting in the total financial cost for attending university itself and in addition for many rural students the cost of living in Perth must be paid for by themselves and/or their families, a cost not considered by city students. Parents financially supported their child by means of paying all expenses (2 participants), all living expenses (6), rent (9), car maintenance (3), university expenses (7), and other (2) which includes setting up a house and/or food.

For a number of students financial support their parents were able to provide was not enough and therefore they required employment so as to remain living substantially in Perth. Some of these students who require employment found it placed pressure on them to meet university requirements, because of the time and energy their job required. Yet their job was financially essential.

Financial difficulties as identified by the rural students themselves were not only obtaining and having enough money to live in Perth and thus attend university, but also managing money matters such as paying bills. All of which takes time, time which would otherwise be spent on university requirements. Many social clubs and sporting groups were not a part of the participants lives in Peth as they would have been at home, due to the difficulty in reaching the destination and the financial travelling and joining fee.

Below are additional financial comments made by the participants when given the opportunity to add the questionnaire, with reference to issue facing rural students undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, Western Australia.

"There is not a sufficient financial system in place for country students."

"One thing I think is a major disadvantage for rural students is the financial side. For city students it would be their choice (in general(to move out of home where as for country kids they haven't a choice."

"It the government can 'give out' dole payments to the unemployed, I believe that they can also provide some financial assistance to those of us who wish to better ourselves, our future and our country by way of study at university and tertiary levels.

DISCUSSION

As identified from the very beginning of this research paper, rural youth are a minority group of Australia's population. So too, and perhaps because of, they are a minority group of

Australia's education system. The 1996 enrolment statistics for Edith Cowan University, illustrates this with reference to tertiary level education. Of the total 19094 students enrolled at Edith Cowan University, either studying full or part time, only 2502 were rural students as compared to the 14048 metropolitan students. It could be correctly assumed that this minority status exists in all West Australian universities. And so perhaps the questions that need to be asked are 1. why is this so? and 2. what can be done to overcome or at least lessen the gap?

To the answer the first question, why are rural students in minority status to their metropolitan university colleges?, reference must be made to the results of this research, documented on previous pages 13 to 18. Results in the form of issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, Western Australia.

It is the fact that rural students are faced with so many more issues than university itself, but because of university itself (ie. living in and coping with a new environment away from home and support) that makes it all the more harder for them to attend, deal with and succeed at university. As identified in the results these issues or difficulties faced by rural students maybe emotional, social or financial. They may even be a combination of all three. Often if an issue arises in one of these domains of the rural student's life, it soon affects another of the above, resulting added pressure. An example as identified through analysis of the results is, if employment is financially required so as to live in Perth so as to attend university, the time and energy needed for the job often limits that which would otherwise be spent on university assignments and/or study. The rural student then becomes anxious about coping with the university requirements and upset themselves emotionally. Although a metropolitan student may also experience such ordeals, they usually have the choice about moving out of home and therefore leaving family, support and resources, something a rural student doesn't if they wish to further their education in Perth.

Many more issues were identified throughout the results and all of which support the original belief of all participants in this research that rural students are disadvantaged when attending university in Perth, because of their rural status and consequently these issues that face them. These difficulties also provide support for and perhaps reasoning behind the fact that "rural students historically and currently have a lower retention rate in both secondary and tertiary education/"

With the number of issues that do face rural students, the additional pressures of university will increase and thus so will the low retention rate of rural students at tertiary level education. It is also the reasoning behind why Rural Students are in minority status in university enrolments and therefore life improving opportunities.
None of the above will change unless some action is taken to actively bring it about. Out of all issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, Western Australia, it was financial issues that were of greatest concern. It became evident that out of the 16 participants only 2 receive Austudy.

Austudy is a form of government financial assistance that "provides help to disadvantaged students who are 16 years of age or over and whose own family financial circumstances are such that without help, full time study would not be possible" (Commonwealth Dept of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1997, p 3). this is wonderful for those rural students that do relieve it but for those who don't , the majority of this research, as well as a few that do, it still leaves the additional financial cost, a burden for many, of living away from home and in which there is no choice, on the students and/or their family. It is this additional cost that is not even a consideration for city students and/or their families.

Surely by the government providing additional financial assistance, as well as Outside, to ALL rural students, the number of university enrolments with respect to rural students, will increase. Thus the number of degrees obtained and greater employment opportunities will also increase. This lowering youth unemployment and unemployment payments for the government.

Provision of help to rural students for overcoming or dealing with the issues that face the, is not primarily a government role. As the reason for the transition to Perth is university, the universities themselves many need to assess their means of support to rural tertiary students. If such groups do already exist the students awareness of it and its accessibility need to be assessed. Although the majority of issues identified are emotional, social, or financial it has been identified and stated that they may affect more than one particular domain of the rural students lifestyle. If a student is having emotional difficulties, his/her mind will be anywhere but of academic importance. It is this that should be of concern to the universities. It is understood that universities aren't there to provide a emotional, social or financial help line rather they are there to provide for academic learning, but it must also be understood that this academic learning will not occur until all other areas of the rural students new lifestyle are under control.

Support groups on university campuses can and do take many different forms. There are support groups such as counsellors, academic staff, student administration and the medical suites, etc but coming to the new life of university in Perth a city, may be overwhelming enough. To then try to obtain help from all various resources never used before becomes yet another issue that faces rural students.

Comments were made by participants in the research questionnaire about the provision of support groups primarily for rural students. Such support groups could offer support and knowledge about simple yet often taken for granted things such as catching public transport, use of library computers and photocopiers to larger issues of accommodation, financial help and accessing other required resources. They also help provide support by means of having someone to talk to, whether it be in times of need or not, and therefore providing for the emotional and social wellbeing of the universities rural students. Social activities also may be arranged allowing for interaction with other for similar backgrounds and therefore perhaps similar experiences. This particular benefit of a support group helping those who found it or do find it difficult to establish new friendships. The benefits of such groups are endless, the help and support they can offer and provide to rural tertiary students is priceless.

Discussed above are only two means of provision for, or dealing with the many issues that do face rural students undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, Western Australia. Yet these two, government funding and university rural support groups could be the make or break for many rural students undertaking or considering university in Perth.

CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this research to identify the issues facing rural students undertaking tertiary studies in Perth, Western Australia. By doing do, lessening the gap between personal experiences and documented information derived via 16 participants personal experiences, now allowing for the expansion of further knowledge, positive experiences, provision for and perhaps even further research into this important topic affect rural youths, families and education.

The Emotional Transition of Twelve Year Olds from Home to a Boarding Situation

by
Katrina Mason

Course: Bachelor Social Science (Children's Studies)
Edith Cowan University; Joondalup, WA
Unit CHN 3122 Research in Families
Date: Semester 1, 1997

Abstract-

Often in Australia, isolation creates barriers to opportunities and facilities that are readily available to other children. Leaving home, or boarding away is an issue that is faced by many Australian families if children are to attend secondary education. This transition forces many changes in behaviour to adjust and accept the move. so how can we aid in this transition? by being aware of and understanding the typical behaviours and coping strategies that are adopted by the young adolescent, then perhaps we can interpret what impact programmes and environments have on the individual in this situation. Only following this, would we then be able to effectively facilitate a positive experience.

Literature Review -

There is so little documented research done concerning children who leave home to attend a boarding facility. the studies that have been done seem to explain conditions of boarding schools in other countries, especially Britain and America, where the needs of the children and impacting environments vary incredibly to those faced by many children in Australia. Issues covered in such studies focus greatly on facilities available and the funding of such - both materialistic in value, and avoid specifying the effect of such a change in atmospheres has on the individual.

The most obvious difference between Australia and other countries is the impact of geographical remoteness. Research done on boarding schools in Britain and America related to those 'elite' schools attended out of choice, rather than need. Its seems that quite the opposite is true in this country and there is a need to ensure that making the transition from home to boarding is comfortable and does not create unneeded stress and anxiety to both the children and their families. Being made aware of issues/experiences that may impact, both positively and negatively, on the child's adapting to a new situation, need to be identified. This is the purpose of my research.

There are few organisation within Australia that offer support and services to families in rural communities. One important service though is that of the Isolated Children's Parent's Association (ICPA) which works to promote a general awareness and understanding of the problems and needs of isolated families in education their children.

This Association offers support and friendship, but also gives isolated parents a voice to express their concerns and to work towards gaining equality of access for their children's education. "A geographically isolated child is one who does not have reasonable daily access to an appropriate school" (ICPA,nd). An appropriate school in this case is one with sufficient curriculum offerings to enable all children to achieve their individual potential. While the ICPA associates itself with the education of isolated children, other organisations too, seem to

focus on a specific domain of support - whether it be financial assistance/funding, housing/hostels, facilities, or incentives/scholarships.

Recently an organisation known as the Country High School Hostels Authority published research they did on 'Understanding the Secondary Education Needs of Isolated Families' (1995). This study was used to ascertain information on how parents chose a secondary school, including the listing of advantages and disadvantages of boarding, as viewed by both parents and child. It was then evident that parents felt that boarding away from home provided more options and opportunities, sporting facilities, the opportunity to make more friends, and become more independent; but at the same time the majority of parents also felt they couldn't control 'influences', keep an eye on progress, that it was more expensive, and that their child matured too early. Of a survey done by students, it was found that the greatest advantage of boarding away was lots of close friends. They also mentioned sport, equipment and facilities, outings/camps, the supervisors, and becoming independent. Biggest disadvantages were found to be the food, 'stupid' discipline/rules, supervisor double standards, a fixed schedule, living away from home, and having no privacy (Country High School Hostels Authority, 1995). From this research, the authority proposed to provide high quality residential college accommodation for students from isolated areas to further their education. the Authority's powers and functions are provided under the Country High School Hostels Authority Act 1960-1979. this legislation provides for the establishment and administration of student boarding facilities.

Studies have been done recently by the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1982, 1984), that discuss Australia's large distances and the need for students to live away from home to attend school. They acknowledge that finding a 'second home' for any child places both emotional and financial demands on the family. But the reports concentrate solely on the funding of services, forgetting the notability of issues that impact on the individual internally while all the external change takes place. In order for society to form some kind of understanding, they will need to know what the individual goes through and how they cope with the change. To recognize the impact that leaving home has on such a young adolescent, is an aspect that needs to be explored more comprehensively.

In an article written by Peter Cookson (1982), he discusses a relationship between boarding schools and the moral community. "Through a specific process of assimilation boarding school students undergo a moral career that is designed to shape their characters and their general social perspective". "boarding schools provide protective environments by which students may act out their identity struggles guided by the moral perspective of the school community" (Cookson, 1982, p95). While this may be true, the views and attitudes of the individual child are ignored. Cookson's (1982) methodology takes on a very external, theoretical view of the situation, and this characteristic, I feel, jeopardises the opportunity to better understand the development process of any one child. If attending a boarding facility has a great influence on a child's moral development as suggested by Cookson (1982), then I feel that the impact it has on the child's emotional growth needs to be researched even more thoroughly.

Previous studies relating to this topic have given an impersonal perspective based on principle and philosophy. the lack of research done on issues faced by young adolescents in rural and isolated areas of Australia, makes it difficult to challenge the conclusions drawn by other researchers, with my own. My objective then, is to identify and interpret the emotions felt by the child upon making the transition from home to a boarding situation, and how different experiences and individuals cope with the change.

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RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the young adolescent deal with the transition from home to boarding?

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

The interactive perspective of methodology is one that illustrates the importance of what is learned through interaction and interpretation. For this reason, the students themselves are central to what meaning is proportioned to the experience they share, which is the move away from home. My role is to use inductive reasoning to form a symbolic understanding based on how I have interpreted an individual's reasons for social action. I need to firstly identify how the shift from living away from home affects the individual, and how the child's environment many contribute to emotions felt.

Qualitative research will dominate my study to capture reality in interaction, therefore determining the meaning and regularities of social actions/behaviour similar or dissimilar among a group of young adolescents. I will be incorporating quantitative research methods in the form of a questionnaire, to better create an overall picture of emotions and changes provoked by a transition that relies on quite a deal of flexibility and adaption. Rather than relying on statistics and 'clear cut' data analysis, this research is more concerned with identifying the impact of uncertain issues, like the quality of care, hostel relationships between both staff and other students, facilities, atmosphere, and also policies/programmes in place to help children cope with the change.

Subjects:

In order to research the emotional transition that a twelve year old may experience when leaving home to attend a boarding or hostel facility, I have involved thirty eight year eight students in a Hostel.

These students are from very remote areas of Western Australia, boarding in order to attend a secondary school, which more often than not, is not accessible to them. I also received the involvement by the Director of the Hostel and a school psychologist.

Materials:
The students participated in an optional questionnaire to help identify the relevance of different issues they may face as part of the transition. In addition to this, I had in-depth interviews with the director of the Hostel and a school psychologist concerning policies adopted to aid in the transition.

Procedures:
I contacted the Hostel and asked for their involvement in the research project. In interviewed the Director initially and then took the year eight students and explained my research objectives before personally handing out the questionnaire which was returned to me after its completion. I then finally interviewed the school psychologist.

Analysis:

After collecting the information from the interviews and questionnaires, extracted and compiled the relevant issues, discussing outcomes and drawing conclusions in a report form. This report will identify and interpret both behaviours and policies, explaining how and why they are believed to impact upon the child. A copy of my final report, withholding any personal information, will be made available in the library of the Hostel where any student can access it.

Ethical considerations:
It was made quite clear that involvement in both interviews and questionnaires, was entirely optional, and that any information that could identify someone, was not disclosed. This was covered in my letter of consent that required a signature by all involved, and I also addressed the issue prior to commencing interviews and filling out of questionnaires.

Questions were also structured so as not to intimidate or embarrass the participant. When issuing out questionnaires, I made myself available for any queries or assistance the participant needed, letting them know too, that I'd rather they ask, than become confused and ignore the question. Is used a small recorder in interviews, but only after the compliance of the interviewee. Following submission of my research, I will burn raw data and erase tapes to ensure confidentiality, and until then it is stored in a locked cabinet.

Results:
The variation of responses in information received from both interviews and questionnaires, has made for some interesting drawing of conclusion. If I am to identify and interpret how the young adolescent deals with the transition from home to boarding, there is a need to focus on emotions felt upon leaving home, and support processes. To better present the results of my findings, I will concentrate on four particular issues, which include, the quality of care, relationships with staff and other students, the environment created by facilities and opportunities available, and importantly too, the policies and programmes that have been adopted to help cope with the change. These issues are all very much interrelated and have a significant impact on the individual.

Quality care is a term contributed to by all different factors, resulting in the opportunity and environment for any one person to develop and achieve to their individual potential. Of the thirty eight respondents to my questionnaire, all but two believed that the Staff at the Hostel genuinely cared about their well-being. This many be attributed to by the clear acknowledgment by staff that the move away from home is very difficult. According to the Director of the Hostel, "We would have eighty percent of our staff training each year devoted to how we can help the young person emotionally and psychologically adapt to this sort of

environment and how we can pass on coping skills" (Director, interview, 1997). When asked whether they felt comfortable in approaching staff members with any problems, students had varied responses, more feeling comfortable in talking to their housemistress/master casually as a friend. It was evident that students believed their houseparent related well to the majority of people in that boarding house, but there were nine students who disagreed with this comment and some who believed that it only happened occasionally. The staff have been trained to let the child know that they are there for them, also making them aware of support services they can seek, and the students supported that their house staff made an effort to understand what other obligations and activities they got involved in.

Quality care is heavily reliant upon expectation. This is derived from family ideology, and so what background the child has come from. When asked how the families of children living away to attend school deal with the transition, the Director of the Hostel commented that they, "...deal with it with great difficulty - particularly those where it is their first child. they feel very guilty, they feel they are missing an important part of their child's development, it doesn't take them too long to feel that either"

(Director, interview, 1997). One issue that came across very strongly in my research, was how much easier it was for students to fit in if they had an older brother or sister boarding with them. Only seven students indicated that they did not have a sibling at the Hostel, which was surprising considering there were only thirty eight participants. Apart from a brother or sister, many knew no one at the Hostel before attending, thus supporting the theory that isolation creates barriers. When asked whether they found leaving home difficult, there were mixed responses amongst students. Fourteen adolescents did find it difficult, the rest, not as much, but approximately a third of the students did not get to see their family on occasions other than holidays.

Relationships between students at boarding school are very supportive. this was clearly illustrated in a question asking whether the individual got on with the majority of the people in their boarding house, but there were a range of responses to the benefits of vertical housing creating a family style atmosphere. It was then made very obvious that these students didn't find it difficult having to share a house with so many others. "A big factor of communal living is you grow strong in developing and maintaining friendships and relationships, but at first the young year eight has difficulty in doing that" (Director, interview, 1997)

the association between students and members of staff is important in developing a system of support. Most of the respondents believe they have the opportunity to speak up about ideas for changes that they feel would be appreciated. this could be interpreted as an individual feeling their opinion is valued by others, therefore giving them a confidence amongst strangers. Before a child adapts to this new environment, there are changes recognised by staff in their behaviour. "Boys will become very quiet. they will feel very intimidated in a house with thirty - thirty two other boys going up to year twelve, so they withdraw. Mostly, however, the biggest problem with boys is they become outwardly -very active; they will be perceived by older boys as being 'cheeky' (Director, interview, 1997). Then each must learn that respect has to be shared.

Girls, however, are more likely to talk to each other about how they feel, and share emotions. This was pointed out by many girls as the factor that made it most easier for them to settle into a boarding facility. For this same question, there were different responses, including many saying they found it difficult at first but settled in and didn't find it so bad, those that found it more difficult leaving their family and were quite homesick, the help of an older sibling at the Hostel, some mentioned programmes like peer support and orientation as helping, the friendliness of others, the support by house staff, the opportunities making them

feel at home, finding new friends. These are all quite positive, but there were some that also mentioned things that made the move more difficult, like the jobs and routines, the food, the not knowing others before coming, feeling intimidated or anxious by the large groups at the Hostel and school, the older students not including the younger ones in activities/conversation, and especially not seeing their family very often.

The staff watch for those children who seem very upset, withdrawn, very dependent on someone else, those who seem to have eating problems, and especially those who are aggressive, because these are characteristics of children who are finding it very difficult to settle in, but there are probably many more characteristics. "Some kids cope with change and are a lot more adaptable than others; I think it varies enormously. It depends on their previous experiences, their personality, and self-esteem. Kids who have had a bit of change and are confident, good at sport, outgoing, tend to cope fairly well" (School psychologist, interview, 1997).

It can be concluded from results that many students feel they came to the Hostel to receive a better education, but when asked whether they had the choice of whether to board at this Hostel or not, it was surprising the number that did. Thirty four of the thirty eight respondents expressed that they did have the choice. Environments created for studying, sleeping and socialising, I found were supported by students as being beneficial for the purpose they served.

Most children have moved away from a small close knit environment to engage in large communal living, thus creating a fair amount of shock. One coping strategy identified by staff is when the student really buries themselves in activities and is therefore involved in everything. they are then "...engaged in something positive with a whole variety of different groups of people and make friendships quickly" (Director, interview, 1997). the students too, believed that the opportunities open to them at the Hostel, were greater than those expected at home. The parents and the families of young adolescents that leave home to board away also find it very difficult. How a child copes often has a lot do with "...how prepared Mum and Dad are for this eventuality, and that doesn't mean that Mum and Dad are cold and callous, but whether they've had time to really think about what this is going to mean and how they will cope with that. Secondly, how much of the child's background was involved in helping them become independent - that has a lot to do with coping in a live-in situation. I think also whether they come from a large family or not. Are they used to living with different ages?" (Director, interview, 1997). It was mentioned by both the director of the Hostel and the school psychologist that a child's success at school and at making friends, their level of self-esteem, and their confidence all contribute to how they adapt, and so the quality of staff and the communication of staff, in recognising the above, is really important.

When asked what the organisation could do to improve the transition, I was told that there was always room for improvement. More could be done with building a stronger relationship with parents. "If the parent is confident that the young person is with someone who cares, then the parent is going to help the young person cope better" (Director, interview, 1997). Ongoing staff training was another issue, an advantage of which would be a houseparent capable of recognising the signs and the importance of the stress that the young adolescent goes through, and the stress parents are going through, so as being able to work effectively with them. the Director would also like to see the year seven orientation period extended to a week, so as the individual is less of a stranger to what they will experience in the following year. They would also like to better involve the parents and have them stay and get to know the house staff who will be responsible in many ways for their child. Within the Hostel I researched, all are involved in a Staff Competencies-Based Review and Planning Process, which is an accreditation process assessing staff on behaviour management, interpreting

education needs, leadership and organisation, communication, facilitating personal development, role modelling, and professional attributes. This can only help to further improve the quality of care provided by the staff.

Discussion:

Leaving home to attend a boarding facility is a transition that is different for everyone. Thee is now way we can predict how a young adolescent will cope, but we can certainly be there to support them in any way possible. If we learn effective ways to promote quality care, then the experience of moving away from home in order to access better education and opportunities, will be positive for all involved. These young adolescents are expected to grow up pretty fast, becoming independent sooner, and therefore, more responsible for their actions. The support from family is extremely important in how the young person copes, whether their parents recognise and are prepared for the transition, but also importantly whether there is an older sibling boarding to advise, and confide in. It was the vision of the Hostel researched, "To be acknowledged in the communities we serve and within the fields of education and residential care as an innovative, dynamic and distinctive contributor to the education, personal development and well-being of students in Western Australia" (Director, interview, 1997).

Personal attributes like self-confidence and esteem, the ability to make friends, and previous experiences, all contribute to how easy or difficult leaving home and adapting to a new environment will be. If a comparison is made with the psychosocial stages of development as proposed by Erikson (1963, 1968), an adolescent faces the crisis of 'identity versus role confusion'. Within this struggle, a child tries to investigate various alternatives concerning future occupations, their personal future, and establish a sense of who they are and where they belong (Kaplan, 1986). It really is a period of experimentation and often a push for independence. It may be insinuated then, that leaving home, and a stable support system, would make the crisis even more difficult and stressful for this aged individual.

We can assume that to ease the transition from home to boarding, we can really just strive to ensure that there is a high quality of care, facilitate close staff and student relationships by providing opportunities to meet others and communicate effectively, create an environment where facilities and opportunities stimulate and benefit the individual, and finally have programmes in place that take into consideration each child's unique way of dealing with the move away from home and offer support. Each of these factors work together in helping a young adolescent make a positive learning experience out of such an emotional driven transition.

This research is not cut and dry, but has helped to identify and better understand what can be expected when a child leaves home to board away. Isolation, perhaps we can conclude, forces upon many young people an expectancy to grow and develop earlier in order to counteract the lack of access to opportunity it bestows. It cannot be overlooked however, that the opportunities and friendships made available to those who do leave home, often are one of the most significant experiences offered, especially if provided in a quality environment.

A Focus on Rural Australia for Students at the University of Ballarat.

By Dr Keith Moore

School of Education, University of Ballarat

Abstract (and introduction)

The teacher preparation course at the University of Ballarat includes a unit titled 'Rural Australia'. This subject, that 79% of second year Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching students undertook during Semester 1 1997, examines the sociology of rural communities and schools. It is especially designed to promote students' understanding of how the attributes and behaviour of rural school teachers can win (or lose) community acceptance and esteem. The contradiction that rural Australians are friendly and welcoming but can take twenty years to fully accept outsiders, is focused upon.

Each student carries out a case study of a rural town or village, and its school, as an assessable task for their 'Rural Australia' unit. They examine sources of division and/or community cohesion in depth. The role of the teacher is especially important. The subject, 'Rural Australia', is also periodically offered to post-graduate (fourth year upgrading) students, almost all of whom are practising teachers, working in rural schools. The comments and suggestions of these Bachelor of Education students about the unit has ensured that the content reflects the concerns of contemporary rural school teachers.

This paper examines the purpose and structure of the 'Rural Australia' elective subject. General information about Ballarat University's primary teacher trainees is also provided.

The university and its students

As the university's home page explains:

> Ballarat itself is a major regional centre within a rich agricultural hinterland and an area of considerable natural beauty. The wealth from the gold discoveries last century provided Ballarat with a heritage of grand Victorian architecture and infrastructure comparable with cities many times its size.

The university is fully independent, and small. Until recently the student body consisted of only 4,000 students. * *The Good Universities Guide to Access and Equity Programs* (1997 p 145) states:

> The university makes genuine efforts to open up education to those who have missed out in the past, and an astonishing eight out of ten students are from backgrounds which are, by official definitions, 'disadvantaged' in one way or another.

Ballarat University places a high emphasis on teaching and learning, 'although research is beginning to get more attention'.

The students at the University of Ballarat have been well placed to undertake a study of rural Australia. A Department of Employment, Education and Training report reveals that in 1991 75% came from rural and isolated areas. The proportion of students from similar backgrounds consisted of 76% at the University of Central Queensland, 67% at the University of Southern Queensland and 58% at both Southern Cross University and the University of New England. Hence Ballarat had, in 1991 at least, the second highest percentage of students from rural and isolated backgrounds out of all of Australia's universities. (*Australian* 9 April 1997 p 40) Furthermore, *The Good Universities Guide to Access and Equity Programs* (1997, p 145) indicates that the university has continued to be amongst the highest 20%.**

EQUITY INDICATORS
1997 Domestic Students at University of Ballarat as at 31/3/1997

	Where are rural and isolated students?	Where are Austudy students?
University of Ballarat (N=4398)	73.1%	37.6%
B.Arts/B.Teach (N=281)	65.1%	52.7%

*In recent weeks an amalgamation with Wimmera Institute of Technology and Ballarat's School of Mines & Industries - An Institute of T.A.F.E. has resulted in this number increasing to 18,000. (*Ballarat Courier*, 18 June 1997, p1)

** Specific percentages for other universities were not available.

The School of Education at Ballarat University has a total of approximately 330 equivalent full-time students, and thirteen full-time and more than half a dozen sessional members of staff. Two hundred and eighty-one students are studying in the four year Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching course. The Bachelor of Arts component, which consists of major and minor subject specialities, is delivered by other schools in the university. Physical Education is a very popular speciality choice, and psychology is also a major area of study for many of our students. The BA/B Teach. qualification provides our graduates with the

opportunity of gaining both primary and secondary registration, although most intend to initially teach in the primary sector.

Alan Smith (1988 p 171) suggested that

> the single most important factor influencing ... students' willingness to accept appointments to inland areas was their lack of familiarity with these areas.

Alexander and Bandy (1989 p 121) also found that most newly graduating teachers preferred their initial teaching appointment to be in a familiar location where they had the support of family and friends. A high proportion of trainee teaching students from rural backgrounds at Ballarat possibly predispose many to return to a rural community to teach after graduating.

Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching students' home addresses as at 31/3/97

	1st year students' home address	2nd year students' home address	3rd year students' home address	4th year students' home address
Ballarat	20.2%	21.3%	25.0%	15.2%
Barwon	17.4%	16.0%	25.5%	18.2%
C Highlands (excl.Ballarat)	5.5%	13.3%	9.4%	6.1%
E Gippsland	0.9%	5.3%	1.6%	0.0%
Gippsland	4.6%	4.0%	1.6%	6.1%
Goulburn	3.7%	0.0%	1.6%	3.0%
Loddon	2.8%	1.3%	3.1%	3.0%
Mallee	1.8%	9.3%	4.7%	12.1%
Melbourne	24.8%	16.0%	14.1%	15.2%
Ovens	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
W District	11.9%	6.7%	4.7%	12.1%
Wimmera	4.6%	5.3%	7.8%	6.1%
Interstate	1.8%	0.0%	1.6%	3.0%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

The need to provide intending school teachers with an understanding of rural teaching and living

Most teacher appointees to rural schools throughout Australia are young, (Watson, 1988 p 159) and this circumstance is expected to accentuate in the future. As the Australian Council of Deans of Education explained in January 1997: 'A looming teacher shortage is likely to be more severe than the notorious shortage of the 1970s and will be most severely felt in rural and other disadvantaged areas'. (*Australian* 27 January 1997 p 3)

Turney Sinclair and Cairns (1980:31) confirmed that 'most country schools find it extremely difficult to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced teachers' despite ample evidence that

> Good teachers who are prepared to stay in isolated communities for relatively long periods of time are ... seen as assets to those communities'. (Boylan et al 1990:55)

As Boylan et al noted: 'Particularly rural schools on the western side of the Great Dividing Range are more difficult to staff than schools on the eastern side'. (Boylan et al 1989:131)

As early as the 1920s educational administrators recognised that teacher training colleges should be situated in regional centres to cater for the educational needs of rural communities. In 1928 the Minister of Education in New South Wales D.H. Drummond established a teachers college at Armidale on the basis that

> if students were recruited from country areas and trained in a country college then they would be likely to want to teach in the country. (Newman 1985:202)

Victoria's first Director of Education, Frank Tate, had established teachers colleges at Ballarat and Bendigo for the same reason two years previously. (Blake, 1972: 890)

Recent studies confirm that an appointment to a rural school is an unattractive option for many trainee teachers. In 1986 Watson, Hatton, Squires and Grundy (1987:4) found that most intending primary school teachers in New South Wales aimed to end up on the North Coast. Their investigation revealed that only 20% of pre-service primary teacher education students and 4% of pre-service secondary students were prepared to teach anywhere in the state, and that most had little experience of rural lifestyles and a negative attitude towards a rural appointment.

Very few pre-service teacher education courses prepare students for rural school teaching. Watson found that 88% of graduating students in New South Wales had been denied a rural component in their training, and Lake confirmed that in Western Australia 84% had not been provided with a course directly related to rural education (Watson 1988:159) despite the appointment of almost 70% of primary and early childhood graduates to rural schools. (Lake, 1985:111) Thus, as Lake explained, many beginning rural teachers encountered a 'professional and social situation largely unconsidered and unencountered during their pre-service programme'. For many their major preoccupation was consequently a struggle for survival. This is confirmed by surveys of practising teachers. Lake (1985:113,117) found that the highest levels of dissatisfaction registered by teachers about the inadequacy of their training was in those areas which were distinctive to the rural situation, namely multi-grade teaching (80.6%), rural living (83.9%) and school-community relationships (60.2%). Crowther, Cronk, King & Gibson (1991:18) also found that

> Relatively inexperienced teachers often report major concerns about their ability to plan for and successfully implement multigrade teaching; to carry out required administrative duties; and to manage school-community relations.

Hence it is not surprising that many rural teacher educators argue that 'issues about rural lifestyles, community participation and ... opportunities for multigrade and rural practice teaching experiences' should be provided at teacher education institutions. (Boylan, Squires, Smith 1994:23)

Teachers newly appointed to isolated rural schools have frequently been portrayed as suffering from culture shock. Clashes with the values of local communities are not uncommon. (Crowther, Cronk, King and Gibson, 1991:18) Beginning urban teachers have little or no social relationships with parents but for beginning rural teachers, 'the relationship ... takes place within both the professional and the social context'. (Lake 1985:116) Moreover, not only do teachers from urban backgrounds have little understanding of rural life, they are also unlikely to remain in a rural teaching position for long thus being deprived of an opportunity to develop an understanding. Rural perceptions of teachers as a transient section of the population unwilling to integrate into the local community are thus well-founded. (Lake, 1985:115)

Doune Macdonald (1994:1) stressed the need for beginning teachers to form 'positive relationships with communities'. This is especially important for rural communities. As Bernadette Bowie (1995:36) stated:

> Community-school links are important and should be improved and encouraged regardless of location. However, the link in rural areas is usually greater because most small, rural schools are the centre of their small community.

Because, as Lake (1985:112) explained, many beginning teachers were

> faced with professional demands for which they were not well prepared, and social circumstances with which they had little or no empathy, ... specialised preparation for rural schools is not only desirable, it is imperative.

Sheila King (1994:31) reinforced this suggestion when stating that pre-service teachers must have 'the opportunity to identify the characteristics associated with rural teaching and living'.

John Carrick in the Report of the Committee of Review of New South Wales in 1989 'recommended that pre-service teacher education courses needed to provide more adequate

training of teachers for rural schools', (Boylan & Hemmings 1992:127) with Bill Cross (1987:46) in his study of British Colombia, Canada, recommending that 'student teachers selected for a rural program must take a course in rural sociology or the equivalent'. Alexander and Bandy (1989:130) also recommended that 'courses on rural living and rural teaching strategies should be offered in all teacher education programs'. Furthermore, as several authors explained, satisfied practising rural school teachers saw their contentment as

> a complex integration of many factors including positive interpersonal relations with students and community members, a sense of personal achievement, and demonstrated community appreciation and support. (Crowther et al 1991:19)

The students who elect to study 'Rural Australia'

'Rural Australia' is a semester long elective unit that has been offered to second year primary trainees at Ballarat University since 1987. This year 79% of second year students studied the unit, although their choice was limited to only one other offering - a sociology unit on schooling. 'Rural Australia' has also been, in the past, offered to fourth year Bachelor of Education (Primary) Upgrading students. It has been delivered on weekends or during school holiday vacations. Last year fourteen practising teachers elected to study the subject at fourth year level.

The home addresses of the students studying 'Rural Australia' can be categorised. Of the fourteen upgrading students who studied 'Rural Australia' in Semester 2 last year all lived in regional or rural localities. Many were headteachers or teachers in relatively small rural schools, three taught in schools in Ballarat, one was an unemployed teacher working in Ballarat, and one was a kindergarten teacher in a country location. All lived in the same geographical areas that they were employed in or nearby. Hence none lived in Melbourne or Geelong. The home locations of the second year students who studied the elective subject were however quite different and are tabulated below:

	Rural Australia	Other elective
Ballarat	19.80%	26.75%
Barwon	17.8%	13.25%
C Highlands (excluding Ballarat)	12.5%	20%
E Gippsland	5.36%	6.75%
Gippsland	3.57%	0%
Loddon	1.78%	0%
Mallee	12.5%	0%
Melbourne	10.7%	26.5%
Ovens	1.78%	0%
W District	9%	0%

Wimmera (Note: Some part-time students did not study either subject)	5.36%	6.75%
Total	**100.0%**	**100%**

Rural Australia - the content of the unit

The subject 'Rural Australia is designed to provide students with an understanding of the complexities of rural society. The social aspects of rural school teaching is especially focused upon.

Lectures encompass Russel Ward's (1966) view that Nineteenth Century Rural Australia was essentially egalitarian, with the exception of a politically and economically powerful squatter class. Drovers, shearers, bullock drivers, and selectors all shared a spirit of mateship and pride in a bush lifestyle and Patterson, Lawson and the Bulletin popularised this view.

Many sociologists undermine the validity of the rural myth and argue that rural Australians were class conscious and that their society was highly stratified. Leslie Lomas, (1979) in his examination of Western District farmers in the 1920s, found a gradation of status groupings that were closely related to income. Graziers, wheat farmers, and potato and onion growers formed the main status categories. Richard Dickens's (1980) examination of the Buln Buln Shire in Gippsland found that a farmer's status was a determinant of his or her political and social influence.

Ron Wild's (1974) study of Bradstow is a particularly useful study of social stratification that enables students to understand the divisiveness than can exist in some country towns. Harry Oxley's (1974) study of Rylstone and Kandos and Kenneth Dempsey's (1990) study of Smalltown (St Arnaud) consolidates this understanding.

Status differentiation on the basis of gender is not neglected. Dempsey's study of Smalltown provides a valuable introduction to this aspect of community interaction and Gretchen Poiner's (1990) ' Gender and Other Power Relations in a Rural Community' offers a more detailed understanding.

The remainder of the course is devoted to aspects of schoolteaching in Rural Australia. Strategies for teacher acceptance or rejection are considered, and teaching aboriginal children and distance education, and especially telematics, are other topics of investigation. Problems associated with rural unemployment are also studied and discussed.

'Rural Australia' serves as an introductory unit to help develop students' rural schoolteaching skills. All of the students spend half a day assisting in a rural school as part of their assessment. This is a requirement that could perhaps be extended further. Detailed instruction in multigrade teaching and associated process strategies are offered to these students during their third and fourth years of study.

A Case Study: Underbool

An important aspect of the Rural Australia unit is the case studies that the students are required to carry out and present to the class. Each student selects a rural community and investigates aspects of stratification and the requirements for a young teacher to fit in socially.

A student, several months ago, studied Underbool. She granted me permission to discuss her investigation at this conference.

Underbool, with a population of 268 people, is situated approximately ninety kilometres from both the South Australian and New South Wales borders, in Victoria's Mallee. Wheat growing and sheep grazing are the predominant forms of farming in the district.

The township of Underbool consists of a general store, a newsagency, Dalgety's, a bank, a post office, a hotel, a bush nursing centre and a garage, as well as residential housing. There are three churches, netball, tennis, cricket, bowls and golf clubs, a fire brigade, and a C.W.A. The local football league was forced to amalgamate with another due to decreasing numbers, thus compelling ardent supporters to have to travel up to 200 kilometres to see their local team members play. Employment categories consist of farmers, teachers, nurses, shearers, and part-time workers at the silo during harvest. Newcomers can find local acceptance difficult unless they play sport, become involved in local groups or have ties with the townsfolk.

The township was found to be divided into six distinctive social groups. These ranged from the businessmen who dominated the council, to the poor who were friendly but lacked material possessions and self esteem. Valuable advice about the role of schoolteachers in small rural communities was provided. The students were made aware that as children and/or their parents were present at most social functions the local teachers could not forget that they were role models both within and outside the school. The investigator further advised that teachers must be members of the community and approachable. Involvement in sport was

desirable. The benefits of teaching in a small school included smaller class sizes and a strong sense of ownership of the school by both students and parents.

The second year Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of teaching student made a video about the town. It was shown to a 'Rural Australia' tutorial class and served as a conclusion to her orally delivered evaluation of the community.

7. The students' perceptions of the course

The second year students were asked to comment upon how the unit 'Rural Australia' would assist them as rural school teachers in the future. Their comments are, I believe, an indication of the value of such a course and have been cited at some length.

Students' comments:

* When entering a new community a teacher must be aware of where they are required to slot in to a hierarchical order; in order to not 'overstate' or exhibit behaviour which is expected of someone of a lower order.

* The subordinate and oppressed state of women within many rural communities could be a shock to female teachers - especially when they realise that the same standards are expected of them. ... But there are advantages and some of them may only be a matter of perspective: fresh air, casual slower paced lifestyle, town amenities and facilities are accessible and cheap, the higher esteem, (teaching still considered a profession) that the town holds for its teachers, the community pride and interest that 'our school' commands and the support that this generates, the smaller numbers mean that you can really get to know your students.

* A new teacher may need to be actively involved in sporting activities and need to approach the community to ask what they may do, join etc to break the ice. In some communities ... however a teacher must simply learn to remain in their allotted place.

* Teachers need to be aware of any stratification system that may affect their pupils. Socioeconomic, dysfunctional family situations etc all affect a child's ability to learn and so a teacher needs to understand the child's position in the social structure to help support their educational needs.

* To be an effective rural school teacher one must watch who they associate with, participate in community events and organisations, accept that in many towns there is a hierarchical system and that in some towns the teacher may not be held in high esteem whereas in others they may be prominent figures.

* One of the worst things a teacher can do when they belong to a rural community is ... misbehave. ... Once a person gets a reputation in a small community it unfortunately sticks. ... I have seen this happen and it has ramifications for the school as well.

* A teacher in a small community should become involved in some way. They could join the local football club, coach a group of children in a chosen sport. They could join a group like the Lions, Apex or Red Cross. Even if they just go and watch the children participate in a sport or score the match, they are seen as being involved in the local community, which the parents like.

* A teacher with strong ideals and beliefs may find that they do not fit into a town that is divided by gender inequality, ... religion or race.

*As a teacher, theories on stratification are very helpful to tell us that there are actually very distinct classes within many towns that don't mix and won't mix.

* Being from a small rural town myself I thought I knew all about what it would be like to fit into a rural town ... as a soon to be teacher. This subject opened my eyes to the truth, that a small country town can be very stratified and that it is not always easy to fit in.

* Teachers must understand the 'Goldfish Bowl effect' as they are constantly observed and analysed by everyone in a small rural town. Thus they must behave accordingly.

* The school is often a centre of the community. As such, teachers are not only seen and judged professionally but also privately.

* Parental involvement, community support and studies relevant to the history and context of the school should be embraced by rural school teachers.

* To succeed as a rural schoolteacher I must have a positive outlook, offer encouragement and have confidence in my actions. I must become involved in community activities and make a strong effort to get to know parents within the town. ... It is sometimes difficult to make friends in highly stratified towns, but the best must be made of the situation.

Conclusion

Numerous studies by rural educationalists indicate that prospective teachers who grew up in rural locations and attended a rural teacher education institution were the most likely to seek a rural appointment. (Boylan and Hemmings, 1992:128) The research for this investigation confirms the accuracy of this understanding with 80% of students who elected to study 'Rural Australia' stating that they would be willing to or intended to teach in a school in rural Victoria and 64% stating a willingness to teach in an interstate rural school. Only 6% were unwilling to teach in a Victorian rural school. Complaints by newly graduated teachers that they are ill-prepared for a rural school appointment can be addressed, to some extent at least,

by the provision in all teacher education courses of a rural sociology unit similar to the 'Rural Australia' subject that is offered at Ballarat.

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Forum
Student Reflection on successful Rural Education

Colin Murdoch chaired a session in which recently successful rural high school students, Carrie-ann Mickan and Neralie Rowan gave a presentation on Rural Education from their point of view. This was very positive and confidently presented by these young people.

The following is not based on academic research but rather on one of those strongly held beliefs of what is right and what is wrong. Mostly it is about that it is wrong to underachieve because of an unsubstantiated premise that rural education is inferior. Actually, as one who has dedicated much of his working life to rural education I regularly feel insulted by those well meaning and apologetic people (often rural people) who propagate this myth.

How many of the audience had a rural education background as primary or secondary students? How many felt this was good for them? How many feel that this experience have helped them to be successful in their chosen fields? I see that this is a large percentage of the audience.

While it took along time coming I certainly feel a successful person and I give credit to my rural background for this. I cite SA hosting this conference as an indicator of this.

The seeds of the idea for the following session were set in a specific moment at an Education Department Conference in 1996. Guest speakers, successful people from a range of backgrounds: sport, science, media, academia, were invited to outline to the teacher group why they felt successful at being enterprising in their chosen fields. Four of the six speakers claimed a rural education background. This was not a criteria for selection, and several volunteered the information that they had made the move to the city somewhat concerned that their rural schooling would see them placed behind their prospective city peers. As well they indicated that they actually found the reverse to be true.

It focussed my wondering on why this myth persists, and what else could I do to expose it. Already in the schools in which I worked I spent enormous effort helping students participate in events and competitions where they regularly took on and matched all comers. Much time was consumed counselling parents to balance their heart felt responsibilities to "prepare their children for the inevitable need to move to the city" (usually done by talking one up or talking one down) with a reasonable recognition of the positive outcomes of what we have.

I have invited school parent groups to track their past students "ten years" on to develop ways of judging the success of the school other than Tertiary Entrance Scores. I have lobbied DECS Administration and School Counsels to promote proportional responsibility for Year 12 scores in cases where one or two years spent in an Adelaide school was preceded by ten years in a rural school for particularly successful students.

School staff have been lead into projects of local significance in order to avoid the focus on disadvantage by distance while signalling to the students that their backgrounds and experiences are valuable and interesting to the teachers and the world. I personally feel that all Adelaide students are disadvantaged by distance in not living and learning right in the magnificent Flinders Ranges. Proof is in that many pay for the once in a lifetime school camp to our area.

At the end of 1996 Neralie Rowan achieved the highest score in the South Australian Schooling System gaining six perfect scores including three subjects which were studied from

her rural school through the Open Access College. This final event synthesised the format of this session.

On any criteria the following speakers will be judged as successes. Both chose to complete their final year of schooling in South Australian Area Schools. They used their local school augmented by Distance Education through the School of the Air. By coincidence both are currently studying Nursing here in Adelaide and both are successful young people in their schooling and beyond. It is with great pleasure I introduce them to you.

Neralie Rowan , Snowtown Area School and
Carrie-ann Mickan, Lucindale Area School.

Winner of the 1997 **Australian Rural Education Award** -
accepted by Ms Judy Lindley
of Toowoomba, Queensland.

WHAT IS AG-ED?

As the name suggests, Ag-Ed is an agricultural education project which we have aimed at upper primary students. During the last three years Ag-Ed has been held in conjunction with the Toowoomba Show.

We call Ag-Ed a 'classroom without walls' experience. Ag-Ed aims to help children gain an understanding of the impact and relevance agriculture has on their every day lives.

Ag-Ed has two components:

a) An Ag-Ed day which involves children in their class groups participating in four interactive agricultural presentations, and
b) A teacher resource package.

a) In 1995 and 1996 Ag-Ed day was held on Wednesday, the first day of the Toowoomba Show. However, this year, due to a substantial increase in numbers of children wanting to attend, Ag-Ed was held on two days. As in previous years, the children came from Toowoomba schools and schools up to 250 kms away. Teachers booked their classes into four agricultural presentations from a list of 20. These were agricultural machinery and technology, beef cattle - the basics, beef auction, bees and beekeeping, cotton, dairy, energy in agriculture, farm safety, fruit and vegetables, grains, horses, landcare - the basics, landcare - trees and forests, medicinal herbs, pigs, poultry, sheep, water, weeds and wool.

I'll deviate for a minute to briefly describe the Toowoomba showgrounds. They are located on the western boundary of the city and comprise 150 undulating hectares. Architecturally designed buildings and pavilions nestling in the hills give the grounds a rural look and feel. Adjacent to the grounds are small farms, adding to the rural atmosphere.

Presentations occur at different sites throughout the grounds. For example, pigs are located in the pig pavilion, wool in the sheep pavilion, dairy cattle in the cattle pavilion. Other presentations take place in general pavilions, or tents erected in strategic positions, such as proximity to appropriate resources, water stations and conveniences.

Beginning at 9.30 am, presentations are timetabled to commence on the half hour, every half hour with the last one concluding at 2.30 pm. (During the three years of Ag-Ed every presentation has been fully booked for the entire day which means the presenters are flat out without a break and are usually exhausted by the end of the day. One presenter spent a week in bed, on her back, after this year's Show.)
Presentations last 15-20 minutes which enables departing groups time to find their next presentation and arriving groups time to settle in.

This year, Lee and I included a resource tent, a facility which teachers could use during rest periods. It was manned by a teacher and student teacher, both with backgrounds in Ag-Science. As well as offering the teachers who came to the tent that desperately needed a cuppa, they were also available to discuss the plethora of resources we had gathered which pertained to those industries represented of Ag-Ed day.

b) This is the Teacher Resource Package. It contains 13 sections of information and activities which supplement the industry presentations. The material is designed to be used by teachers in the classroom should they plan lead-up and follow-up sessions with their classes. In most sections we indicate how the material can be used across the curriculum. By February next year Lee and I will have added sections on soil, water, weeds, agricultural machinery and technology and some fruit and vegetables. We will also update medicinal herbs and grains.

By the way, the dog on the front cover is our mascot, Ed, who pops up on nearly every page of the package. He is also on the industry presentation signs erected at each site.

Writing sections of the Teacher Resource Package is a very time consuming exercise. Once we have written what we consider to be pretty good stuff, we send drafts to at least three people within each industry. They critically appraise our work, as it often contains inaccuracies and outdated information. We re-write, send the improved version off again, and keep our fingers crossed that we've got it right! It is then printed and illustrated.

Included in the Package is an Ag-Ed agricultural information and resource directory, which was compiled by Lee and which is updated each year. Teachers and students can refer to the directory if they need to source further information on any of the industries participating in Ag-Ed day. The directory lists all current publications and web sites.

The Package is sent free of charge to 200 schools within a radius of 1 1/2 hours drive from Toowoomba. It seems the Package draws many of the teachers to Ag-Ed, and it is the teachers who refer the Package to their colleagues. Thus it travels a good deal further than our limited radius and often ends up in extraordinary places!

Ag-Ed does not patronise children with the 'you kids should be grateful to farmers who work hard to put food in your belly and clothes on your back' story. Neither is it a tool to promote commodity groups and products or a romantic lifestyle. Rather, it affords students who we must remember are tomorrow's decision makers, the opportunity to examine the paddock to product processes of our food and fibre systems, the sustainability issues that support them and co-dependence of urban rural dwellers. In essence - the business of agriculture.

Therefore Ag-Ed is not just a programme for children from non-rural backgrounds. Teachers from country schools have embraced Ag-Ed in an attempt to show their students the 'big picture of agriculture'. Some of these teachers are concerned that many children from their schools, by following the trend of leaving school at age 15 to work on the family farm, will know little else other than what Dad does. (After visiting Ag-Ed for the first time, a teacher from the Emu Vale School mentioned to us that her students who came to Ag-Ed day thinking they knew it all admitted to her their surprise at how much they had learned.)

The business of agriculture does not stop when the raw product leaves the farm gate. Rather it involves an entire network of people - a little like the ripple effect when a stone is dropped into water - with the farmer being the stone. There are trucks which need re-fuelling and servicing, silos, gins, processing plants which need to be built and maintained; tractors always seem to need spare parts, on-farm workers such as shearers and harvesters; then there are people more in the background, yet still providing essential services - agronomists, veterinary surgeons, economists, scientists, food technologist and let's not forget the lecturers at universities who teach these professions. The list is endless- even without starting on the horse industry which incidentally is the biggest employer of people in Toowoomba.

Consequently, despite the very low percentage of Australian population being primary producers, there are vast numbers of ripple out there (and ripples have families) to prove that agriculture has a significant impact on our lives.

The fact that agriculture meets our basic needs of food, shelter and warmth, that currently the media is pursuing topics such as native title claims, drought relief, gun control, el nino, conservation, the hole in the ozone layer, global warming and teenage suicide means that the sustainability issues of agriculture impact on the lives of urban and rural dwellers as well. This is recognised by the Ag-Ed committee and we have encompassed landcare, water and soil conservation, the planting of trees and forests, weed control and farm safety as part of the Ag-Ed learning experience.

TO WHAT DOES AG-ED OWE ITS SUCCESS?

There are several contributing factors to the success of Ag-Ed. Firstly, we have received enthusiastic support from industry. I need to mention here that a few industry groups initially perceived Ag-Ed as a vehicle for promotion of their products, and who can blame them? However, with some gentle guidance from us they came round to putting into practice our philosophy of providing an educational experience, to light a spark of enthusiasm and interest in each child. If industry blatantly marketed their product during the presentations they would lose the interest of the students and the support of the teachers. (That a child may leave Ag-Ed day having understood only one fact about only one of the industry presentations he/she is a mark of success for us.)

Industries contribute to Ag-Ed in two ways - by organising and participating in their presentations and by providing us with information and feedback for the Teacher Resource Package, as previously acknowledged.

Presentations require thorough preparation. Meetings are held wherein representatives from each facet of an industry, eg. producer, DPI extension officer, grower organisations, discuss details of the presentation format, resources they will require, who the presenters will be. Sometimes Lee and I attend these meetings to advise and re-assure. To people not used to speaking to an audience, the thought of presenting can be quite daunting. Our message is to keep it simple, if possible refrain from the use of videos and slides, speak in a language the children can understand - no industry jargon or terminology - use references the children can relate to eg. if telling them how much a bull eats in one day, compare it in numbers of Weetbix. We discourage the handing out of stickers and paraphernalia and the use of gimmicks, in fact anything that will distract from the actual presentation. We suggest presentations can be interactive and allow for plenty of sensory explorations and hands on experiences, in other words concrete rather than abstract learning opportunities.

We recommend a minimum of two presenters to provide variety and a break for the person not talking. Ideally a presenter is someone who is dynamic, flexible, has loads of stamina, a sense of humour, thorough knowledge of the industry he/she is representing and an ability to establish a rapport with the ten different class groups to be encountered in one day.

Presenters who can deviate from a set script or presentation outline fare better than those who can't or won't. Often different class groups may have different expectations of presentations. They students may just want to ask questions, or they may wish to pursue a special interest in each industry, eg. the use of chemical sprays on cotton farms, and this highlights why flexibility is an important quality.

A second contributing factor to Ag-Ed's success is the recognition we have received from the Department of Education of Ag-Ed's credibility as an educational project. The very positive response from classroom teachers to Ag-Ed day and the Teacher Resource Package is further encouragement for us to keep the project alive and expanding. I will quote Mr Ken Rogers, our Regional Director of Education, who, upon visiting Ag-Ed this year made these two remarks in the context of his praise for the day: 'four walls do not make a classroom" and "one day children will stop going to school because it interferes with their learning".

We have also approached officers at the Darling Downs Curriculum Centre for guidelines on writing curriculum - appropriate material for our Teacher Resource Package. They are very willing consultants, so much so that one officer wrote the entire landcare section for us!

Back to those good old classroom teachers - all teachers who attend Ag-Ed day are given an evaluation form to complete. Their comments are insightful and many are critical to the following year's planning. We pass on all their feedback of the presentations they attended to the relevant industry and if we feel it necessary, Lee and I discuss this feedback with the individuals concerned.

A third contribution to our success is the happy working relationship that Lee and I have farmed in working together. We share common philosophies and goals where Ag-Ed is concerned and have found that one's strengths balance the other's weaknesses. To this end, as coordinators of Ag-Ed, we have been able to establish sound administrative practices. Still, lots of mistakes happen and we have learned much from experience and trial and error. However, we have always managed to meet our deadlines (sometimes only by seconds) and our three Ag-Ed days have all run very smoothly.

Holding Ag-Ed in conjunction with the Toowoomba Show presents logistical problems such as allowing bus loads of children in through the gates, and once inside, moving them around the grounds.

Our vigilant show time gatekeepers take their jobs very seriously and are constantly on the look out for erstwhile free loaders, hence the necessity to provide each class group with a large brightly coloured Ag-Ed bus pass which identifies who they are. (If the teacher remembers), this is placed inside the bus window and assuming the bus arrives at the correct gate, permits hassle free entry. As the bus approaches the designated bus drop off zone, tour guides, one allocated to each class, prepare to meet their class. Tour guides and teachers both have kits containing a map of the showgrounds and a timetable, and on the assumption that two heads are better than one, can hopefully negotiate their class from site to site and keep on time.

For the 1995 and 1996 Ag-Ed days, our tour guides were students from Dalby Agricultural College. This year our guides were Year 10 and 11 Ag-Science students from Toowoomba Grammar School. The guide's role is to ensure their classes arrive at each of their presentations on time, as well as assisting class teachers as required. The Toowoomba Grammar School boys were marvellous and like the students from Emu Vale, admitted surprise at learning so much from the presentations they attended. They also learned a great deal about the time and motion management of children.

Lastly, the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland (Toowoomba), the owners of Ag-Ed have of course provided a very supportive role. Every project has to have a beginning and it was the imagination of their Committee that saw all the components of and education program existing at various exhibitions.

General rural recessions have prevented direct funding support but Committee members' voluntary charitable fund raising efforts, including my family's manning, many many hamburger stalls, have provided much needed funds to cover basic costs such as printing, postage and telephone accounts. Both office and ground staff have been most helpful and obliging at all times. Committee and auxiliary members have been most encouraging.

CONCLUSION

Ag-Ed is continuing to grow, and as it does, Lee and I must commit more and more hours to its development. During its infancy, back in 1994, Lee and I were able to work at part time jobs, write resource material and coordinate Ag-Ed day. Halfway through 1995 we realised that we would have to resign from our jobs in order to devote full time working hours to Ag-Ed. Our commitment has paid off, though perhaps to our detriment. We have reached the stage where our limited funds and resources are all but depleted. Without funding, Ag-Ed's development is arrested and it remains a project that happens only as a part of the Toowoomba Show.

With funding, it can become an independent event, still at the Showgrounds, but lasting up to a week, and therefore able to be accessed by more students including students from further afield. The demand for these students is there, what is needed is the where-with-it-all to meet it.

With funding, Lee and I can facilitate a transportable working model of Ag-Ed. Again, the demand is there, from centres as far away from Toowoomba as Mt Isa and Perth.